

PYRAMID  
AND TEMPLE



JULIUS MEIER-GRAEFE

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Pyramid and temple

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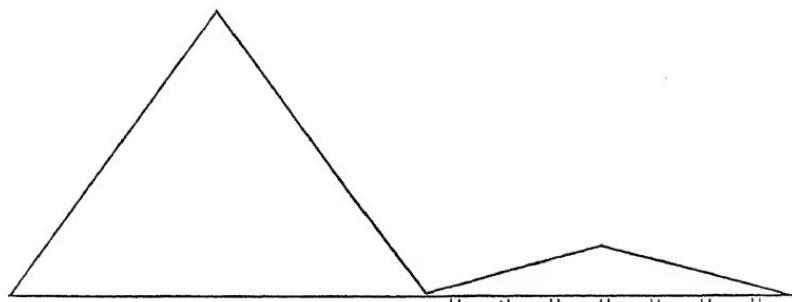
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PYRAMID  
AND  
TEMPLE

BY  
JULIUS MEIER-GRAEFE  
TRANSLATED BY  
ROGER HINKS

▲  
NEW  
YORK  
1930



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### EGYPT

	PAGE
THE SUN	II
THE PYRAMIDS	20
AT THE CONVENT	36
SAKKARA	45
THE PEOPLE OF THE PYRAMIDS	53
THE FAMILY IN THE CAIRO MUSEUM	66
ANOTHER FAMILY	76
A THIRD FAMILY	80
KING ZOSER'S EAR	88
THE LITTLE RED HOUSE	95
THE MUSEUM AND ART	103
CLINICAL DETAILS	110
THE MIDDLE KINGDOM	117
THE MOKATTAM	130
THE NEW KINGDOM	137
ASSUAN	147
THE TRIP TO NUBIA	166
KOM-OMBO AND EDFU	190
LUXOR	196
DER-EL-BAHRI	210
BENIHASAN	221
THE NEW SPHINX	227

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PALESTINE

	PAGE
JERUSALEM	241
SETTLEMENTS	250
THE SYNAGOGUE	262
THE STRUGGLE	269

## GREECE

THE ACROPOLIS	277
THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM	295
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM	307
THROUGH THE PELOPONNESUS	317
OLYMPIA	332
CORINTH	336
IMPROPTU	338
MOSAICS	343
CAPE SUNION	349
CONSTANTINOPLE	352

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Daughter of Amenophis IV. New Kingdom. The Pyramids at Gizeh. Sphinx and Pyramids at Gizeh. The Sphinx in its Original Condition.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Limestone Statue of Ti.	52
Limestone Statue of Renofer.	52
Diorite Statue of Chefren.	53
Village Magistrate. V Dynasty.	60
Bronze Statue of King Phiops and His Son.	60
Alabaster Statue of Mykerinos.	61
King Mykerinos with two Goddesses.	66
Our Family. Ni-Ra-Anch. (Limestone)	67
The Elders, Nefer-Hotep and Wife. (Limestone)	78
Limestone Statue, V Dynasty.	79
Lifesize Statue of Renofer II. (Limestone)	79
Rahotep and Nofret. (Limestone)	96
Sacrificial Stone. III Dynasty.	97
Wooden Statue of a Priest. Old Kingdom.	97
A Scribe. V Dynasty.	112
A Servant Girl. (Limestone)	112
Door. V Dynasty.	113
Sesostris I. Middle Kingdom.	128
Head of Sesostris III. Middle Kingdom.	129
Thutmosis III. New Kingdom.	144
Amenothes, Son of Hapu. XVIII Dynasty. New Kingdom.	145
Luxor Temple. Papyrus Pillars of Amenhotep III.	208

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Colossi of Memnon at Luxor.	209
Karnak. Avenue of Sphinxes.	224
Der-el-Bahri. Three Views of Queen Hatshepsut's Temple.	225
The Sphinx in its Present Condition.	240
Front View of the Sphinx, Present Condition.	240
The Sphinx undergoing Restoration.	240
Jerusalem. The Old Jewish City.	241
The Entrance to the Omar Mosque.	256
The Omar Mosque.	256
The Theseum.	257
The Parthenon.	257
Sandaled Maiden on the frieze of the Nike Temple. <i>Acropolis Museum.</i>	304
Stele of Aristion. <i>National Museum.</i>	305
Archaic Statue. <i>Acropolis Museum.</i>	305
Zeus Temple. Olympia. (Pediment)	320
Moschophoros. <i>Acropolis Museum.</i>	320
Zeus Temple. Olympia. The Labors of Hercules. (Metope)	321
Eleusinian Relief. <i>National Museum.</i>	321
The Daphni Monastery near Athens.	344
Mosaic, Daphni. The Resurrection of Lazarus.	345

**EGYPT**



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## THE SUN

*Cairo: Mid November.*

THE skin stretches. Sore places heal up, and tainted swamps turn into flourishing gardens. The bones relax, hollows fill out, and the vitals, supported and relieved by the active pores, function easily. The activities of the skin, of which I knew nothing hitherto, have acquired a real meaning since they came to control the entire workings of my body.

The hotel is half empty. There are one or two islands in the big dining-room. One is clamorously inhabited by the extensive Behn family from Berlin. Lost in the sea of chairs is Mr. Coolman of Baltimore, morose, and portentous in circumference. Nearer us is an old Goat from Paris with a very young dandy, perpetually wreathed in smiles. Then a vague pair of Englishmen over by the partition; they do not contribute much to our social pleasures. The emptiness corresponds to our inner state. Although we abandon ourselves to the sun's benediction and therefore have no excuse to feel neglected, there is something wanting. Warmth and emptiness are the predominant note. Behn and his companions seem to have transported to their new surroundings only the most trivial conventions of their habitual *milieu* and remain completely passive, unless you count as activity the relations between the Goat and the smiling young man, who has nothing to laugh at as night draws on. We warm ourselves, and still have plenty of time to light cigarettes

and forget to look at the papers. The sense of warmth remains quite abstract, since no variation intensifies it or diminishes it. After three days you forget that it was ever cold; and you have to look for something else to talk about—and cannot find it.

There are remarkable things here, presumably full of opportunities for instruction and enjoyment, with whose help we might contrive to raise our inner temperature. I do not know what holds us back. Perhaps it is the sun. The sun stands between things and ourselves. I am not yet in Egypt—merely in a climate, and I regulate my life by the hotel time-table. At most I fraternize with the Behns and the person from Baltimore. The rest of the time I sit about with Babuschka, seven trunks and my past, and observe how my skin stretches and my bones relax.

Any one with a particle of gratitude ought of course to receive this gracious gift on bended knee; but there is really no question of receiving it. You do not take the sun; the sun takes you, as though you were a coolie, as mere epidermis. Yet there naturally survive the relics of a more personal epoch, full of ills, no doubt, but also more active. . . . This physiological enchantment covers my limbs like a suit of ready-made clothes, and I feel slightly absurd in it. Somewhere inside me there is still a little piece of ice which will not melt for all the sunshine and makes resistance a point of honor. That is only natural. Let us say that for years I had to get along without legs; during which time I read countless books and led a life that, if sedentary, was at least an intelligent affair. Suddenly my legs are returned to me. And now, up and doing! *Gratis*, of course, but what conditions attaching! Formerly I sat still, lived in a reasonable fashion, and only somebody who happened to look under the table noticed anything. But if somebody did notice, he looked at me in astonishment, as though at some phenomenon; for naturally I could concentrate much more easily than other people, as though my intelligence were shod with seven league boots. . . . Or let us say that I was blind, and a successful operation has re-

stored to me the precious gift of heaven. In that case it was only by the merest chance that I didn't break my neck or go crazy in the very first moment of recovery.

I am not exaggerating. Remember how Dürer went on about the sun in Venice. The sun in Venice—good gracious! A tolerable pretense at a sun, I dare say; but I'm not surprised that it left a lump of ice inside him large enough to remind him how he longed for sunshine, even while he was actually enjoying it. He never had the chance of abandoning himself to the sun.

Babuschka thinks the light is more beautiful here than it is at home: which is slightly illogical, even a trifle comic. Different, if you like; everything is different—the earth, the human beings, the animals, the atmosphere. Whether one prefers the Egyptian cattle, with their expressionistic structure and their pointed heads pushed forward, to Holsteins, is a matter of temperament and taste and signifies nothing. In appearance they are completely different creatures; and though they may answer much the same purpose, their symbolic aspects are worlds apart. No Egyptian would ever call a stupid person a cow; at least I can't imagine his doing so. I can imagine any sort of beauty here; the only thing I can't imagine, my notions being what they are, is the possibility that I could ever freeze again after this sunshine, for that implies an intimacy which I cannot conceive and which I do not even find desirable.

Naturally I am capable of making such a supposition; and like any rational creature I shall eventually make it and learn to reckon with anything under the sun. I shall grow acclimatized and finally succeed in making light of the miracle and talk of something else. The prospect is not particularly tempting, although my present condition betrays all the awkward symptoms of change.

My general well-being follows suit. To some extent I exaggerate it, for Fürstenberg, my doctor, thinks my kidneys are not doing too badly. Whenever possible I invent this detail for the sake of

literature, otherwise my story might be even more exaggerated. But even with the liveliest nephritis you would feel a champion here.

This disposition drove me in the first place into the arms of my friend Ibrahim, one of the Bedouin who swarm here outside every hotel. Ibrahim was wearing a yellowish white striped silk under-garment and over this a heavy cloak of the deepest ultramarine. A white turban was twisted round his brown head, and a white silk cloth was knotted about his neck. He had one eye missing; the remaining one glinted at you shrewdly, but kindly. Babuschka could not bear him, because he would take us into mosques and *tutoyer* us: a purely linguistic peculiarity which had its charms for me, as it reminded me of Louise, my old Swiss *bonne* in Paris; she used to do it too, and she was a treasure. I liked him, though I also am indifferent to the attractions of mosques.

However, Ibrahim was also our companion on our first expedition to the Pyramids. Babuschka's theory that we could quite well do the Pyramids without him, and that it would be cheaper to go by tram, did not carry the day. Women succeed in combining with their devotion to the higher pleasures an attention to detail to which we men are driven professionally but which we try to avoid when occasion offers, if only to convey the impression that we know how to generalize. Many women are completely indifferent to this impression, and quite often are actually proud of their powers of resisting it. Babuschka perhaps enjoyed the overwhelming spectacle even more than I did, and was not to be dragged away from the hill which afterwards we came to call our hill; yet she none the less had her eye on Ibrahim, who was quite well aware of her aversion for him. Actually there was little to complain of—even the tiresome episode in the bazaar. I too deplored his obstinate preference for the Arab quarter of Cairo; but it seemed hardly fair to harass him with our dislike of mosques, which must have been

unintelligible to his Moslem instincts, and which in any case was not shared by most foreigners.

It's quite alarming. I often wish it were a thing of the past, a mere memory: no longer that burning ball in the sky, but a part of my life and experience. For it eludes us, for all that it is perpetually shining upon our skins, there under our very noses. It eludes us, because a thousand stupid trifles are always distracting us; because Ibrahim turns out after all not to be the true servant of the sun, but a greedy dragoman; because we are restless and flighty, incapable of, fundamentally unequal to letting the rays penetrate us and melt that last fragment of northern ice, that relic of chilly Europeanism, that allows us only to warm our skins. One ought to embrace the outside world within oneself, even if it thereby ceases to be the outside world. An imaginary, an artificial sun, then, instead of the real one? I suppose so; for if one is susceptible to nothing but pure physiological effects, one may as well go and hang oneself. The most rational cure for spiritual ailments would be to pack off home as quickly as possible.

Perhaps one's fancy only takes this turn if one has been blind or obliged to sit without legs. When one first discovers the use of one's new limbs there's no telling what one may not call a nine days' wonder.

The importance of natural obstacles must not be underrated. We may freeze after sunning ourselves, but in spite of the cold outside we are capable of warming ourselves inside. This capacity is responsible for all sorts of activities. A good deal of religion and civilization and culture hangs by the stove; and also the tastiest part of reason, it goes without saying. In point of fact Ibrahim is a dragoman and not a sun-worshipper at all. I admit it. At all events an agreeable shape without any meaning. Now we're getting down to it. One cannot help getting used to one's surroundings in time; after a while we shall contrive to feel cold even here, and perhaps develop unheard-of powers of resistance. Maybe we shall actually

look back with regret to our present transitional state. At present the most animated topic of conversation is always the great It. Ibrahim may regard us as mere prospects; the bazaar episode may take what turn it chooses: never mind—the great It stands there in the sky, and it would be absurd to wrangle in its presence. As long as it shines upon us, there shall be no problems. We have also agreed to admit the secret hope that it may melt the last ridiculous particle of ice and one day dispel it with all appropriate finality.

As long as day lasts it goes on shining. The morning has no social setting; it is no abstraction that you identify by the calendar, but that ceases to exist beyond the sound of the telephone bell and one's professional duties and the other incidents of one's life in Berlin. On the contrary, it's a highly concrete affair that you can touch and feel and see. I do not claim this as a particularly striking discovery; none the less it is the fundamental fact one cannot help mentioning. In this country the day is bright and the night is dark. Furthermore, one feels less and less impelled to behave in an original manner. In this brilliant light one needs none of those ingenious subtleties that give zest to life at home. One simply wants to be normal and dull and to let things slide.

But while the stunted faculties are satisfied as soon as they are relieved, those which are more accessible to the will are always demanding to be exercised. Instead of lying quiet in the warmth your mind is always prodding at your consciousness. This is what makes it so different from Italy. Here the sun doesn't weaken you. In Sicily about this time of year the days can be warmer by the thermometer than they are here, but there you feel relaxed and want to lounge about. Another morning, as likely as not, it will be pouring. Really the air reminds you more of the sunny heights of Switzerland, even to the sharp drop in the temperature at sunset. But as everybody knows, at St. Moritz you are hemmed in by storms, and at the best of times you get the peculiarly modern effect of sweltering in the midst of snowdrifts. But the climate of Egypt

is fenced about not by jagged mountains, but by an endless plain—perhaps larger than all Europe—the desert. Hence the incomparable purity of the air, except in that tiny corner where a million of Ibrahim's dirty friends make it a bit unreliable. The miracle is It, the great norm. Since the Egyptians took to behaving as if they were in control, the arrangements often leave much to be desired. The sun is no deceiver: it has gone so for thousands of years. The historian reckons here with big numbers. Anno 4241 saw the invention of our year with 365 days. Six and twenty native dynasties reigned here, the learned reckon, and when the first began there already existed a wonderful order of things. After the last there was still half a millennium before our era. The Persians and then the Greeks and then the Romans; and then, over there in Palestine, a night's journey away by sleeping-car, Christ was born. All these ages, with all there is in them and all we should like to know about them, would overwhelm us, were it not for that great simplifying factor in the heavens. Cultures came and went through the endless ages, and then came one which we could recognize as akin to European culture, if it weren't so appallingly remote and Europe weren't so given over to evil ways. That is what we must realize. A wonderful problem, a perfect theme to work out, if only we were in a position to hack off a piece of the reality in front of us.

It seems as though the desert air could dry up all the decay that we have caught from our age, as well as every restless craving for originality; and the sun could give us wings to soar over the epochs which stand before us like walls of rock. The great It, the source of every miracle in Egypt, shines to-day just as it shone under king Menes. None of the facts revealed by testimony, no discovery deciphered by the admirable zeal of the learned from chiselled hieroglyph or wrested from yellowing papyrus is more certain than this. Nothing is more profoundly satisfying. All this outcome of unparalleled effort emerged under the rays of the same sun. All but the scantiest fragments has gone to rack and ruin; and although at

times one is sorely grieved, for never was a greater achievement destroyed and never was the lust to destroy blinder and more fanatical, yet half an hour later one smiles and interprets this waxing and waning as merely one of the many functions of the imperceptible, inexhaustible norm. Certainly ancient Egypt was beautiful, dazzlingly beautiful, during the long, during the tiny period when it stood intact, if it ever really was intact; but it was beautiful, too, before it was complete, and beautiful in its fall, and beautiful thereafter; and still the great It sheds its light upon winding alleys and filthy holes, upon domes and minarets, upon the wide streets of a modern city and upon crumbling tombs, upon clean and verminous folk of every hue, upon motors and donkeys and carriages and dromedaries, and wakens them all to life and beauty. Stand aside a little, and you fall to your knees. Last of all, they have never been able to make away with the Mokattam, the limestone height to the east of the city, nor the Nile, nor the desert, still less the pyramids; and every trace that the destroyer's hand has spared acts in one way or another, even in the imagination of world-weary Europeans, as a stimulus to a new creation.

Do not grieve; for even in the frozen north there are reflections of this miracle. Let the monuments of your Rameses get carefully frosted over, and if a couple of sunbeams chance to fall on them at a lucky moment you may well see Egyptian monuments even in the Berlin *Puppenallee*. Even among the Eskimos you may feel a breath of this enchantment. Were it not so, no amount of revelry would keep a Northerner alive here.

There were many gods in Egypt. They adored every conceivable beast. Babuschka maintains that this passion is a survival from an earlier age and reappeared only in a time of decadence, and that in the golden age their use of zoölogy was purely symbolic. She may very well be wrong; but ever since she held her own with Ibrahim in the bazaar episode, I never venture to contradict her. We can no longer make out where symbolism left off and plain supersti-

tion began. In any case the sun was always the chief god, and the many secondary gods, the outcome of the instinct to particularize and priestly dishonesty, achieved at most a slight clouding of the Egyptian horizon. . . . One day—it is hardly 3300 years ago—Amenophis IV swept the whole elaborate swindle aside and allowed the validity of only one god, the Sun. This king stands very close to us. Everything we know of his acts and private life shows him in a sympathetic light. He was interested only in the things of the spirit and hated militarism. Naturally he fell foul of the rest. In later days he was called the Heretic King; hardly was he dead before they cleared away all that he had done, and the wicked priests did their utmost to bring his memory to naught. He had an intelligent face, and the back of his head was quite well developed. I daresay he was a shockingly degenerate fellow.

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## THE PYRAMIDS

EVERY afternoon we set forth. Number Fourteen goes every half hour from the Ataba. Babuschka sulks as long as we stay inside the city; and some accident is sure to happen as well. Soon after the Nile bridge the Triangles come into view for the first time. Often they mask each other on the journey so that only one is visible. Naturally they look their best when you see them in a row, especially when those at Abusir, and even at Sakkara, are included in the background. From Heluan you can see the whole street of pyramids, for which reason Babuschka would prefer to get out there. If Heluan were not rendered unsafe by Herr Behn and his satellites we should have settled there ourselves. At Heluan there is absolutely nothing to see except pyramids and Behns. The former in the distance, the latter close at hand, fretting at every delay. It was the only excursion that we had undertaken so far. This exclusive preoccupation with the pyramids is directly responsible for the shrinkage of our outlook and all our instincts. We wake up with them and go to sleep with them. We have been here four or five weeks and haven't set foot in a museum, not even the Egyptian. But for Ibrahim we shouldn't have seen a single mosque. My father knew every mountain in Switzerland. We know every pyramid; nobody can beat us there. They are our specialty. Only from the outside, of course. We deliberately keep historical considerations at

arm's length, and if some well-meaning person starts telling us something about them, Babuschka begins to get drowsy. She behaves as if she had been brought up with the things.

On the way there in tram Number Fourteen I regularly reflect upon the many reasonable projects which remain unfulfilled to this day, upon the way the time is slipping by, upon the absurd ease with which our habitual diversions pursue courses legitimate enough in their way, but quite uncontrolled. I am inclined to think that we are really unsophisticated, a prey to picture-postcard romanticism.

"We might just as well get out and have a look at the museum," Babuschka remarked yesterday in a cheerful way. She was in brown. It was three o'clock, and we were almost at Gizeh. After a while she asked whether I considered the pyramids works of art.

"No," I said, quite firmly. But she was not to be put off.

"But Raphael and that sort of thing . . . that's art, isn't it?"

I looked at the row of loaded camels in the country road, each with an enormous sagging bundle of rushes and sugarcane on its back, each tossing its head in the air. Presumably she meant what she said.

We were crossing the floods. The water has gone down perceptibly since we have been here; and there is corn growing where there was nothing but mud a fortnight ago. Cheops stands up in the background. As usual I greeted him with a nod, and Babuschka, taking it for an overture, turned towards me. The shadowed triangle cut clean across the horizon.

"Mathematical twaddle!" I exclaimed in a fury.

Babuschka protested mutely that it wasn't her fault.

Now the lighter side came to the fore; and the whole tone changed, though the outlines kept their sharpness. In the inadequacy of words, said I, let us call it beautiful: beautiful in the sense that a stone is beautiful, or a mountain, or what not.

"No!" said Babuschka.

"Why not, pray?"

She shrugged her shoulders idly, at a loss for a tangible formula. Whenever she wears brown, we always fall out. Nature, she maintained, was responsible for nothing so large and artificial.

"Large and artificial! What a delicious combination!"

She was right, though. In the impalpable inorganic sphere there is something attractive about the artificial, that which is made and not grown, that which is totally opposed to nature. It is exclusively a product of human consciousness. It would be nothing, though, without the sun: that one must admit. Without the sun it would never acquire a function. A more or less useful thing, therefore, an apparatus for catching light and shadow, very intelligently contrived, no doubt, but far too dependent upon its context to count for much as a work of art. This concept one must leave out of account; you may call it a compromise of great significance and hallowed by time, but still a compromise.

"Something like a machine?" she queried.

"Precisely. A reflector, let's say. That's it, a reflector. Excellent comparison!"

Naturally the Egyptians were not unconscious of the light playing on their frames, and they spent their time in it just as we do. Every one manages as best he can. Perhaps it's a good thing for the Europeans to have less sun.

Babuschka would not give in. She simply found the pyramids large, and that was all there was to it. Because they were large, they were expressive. Because they were expressive, they were art, and needless to say the greatest of all time. Babuschka did not realize that any volume on that scale and of so simple a shape must necessarily be effective. If we estimated creative worth by material size we should be on our knees before the Eiffel Tower, and every New York skyscraper would surpass the Parthenon. With rule and compass and the necessary outlay, such as they could then afford, we could put up pyramids six times as large, and imagine a symbolism to correspond.

Big things do not bestir themselves. No upheaval can displace so much as a stone. What is their appeal, then? Yes indeed, what is their appeal? Why do you set out every single day that God brings to light? Mere habit? And if it is a question of habit, why is there a glint in your eye every time the great gleaming flanks reappear? What drags you up to the top of the pyramid? Mere pleasure at the height? They are not really so big compared with your anticipation of them, and yet they get bigger every time. In the end one would come to prefer them small, to have marked them and learned them and inwardly digested them: these mechanical contrivances, put together by rule and not created. They wander forlornly in space, like discreetly masked sun-gods.

When you get out, ten Ibrahims fall upon you and offer you their donkeys and camels and their silly faces. If they think they're up against an Englishman the donkey is called Whisky Soda. Babuschka can have a camel called Bismarck. Always the same story. They are always a bit behind the times. When you drive away a too assiduous applicant with your stick, he replies in German, "*Eile mit Weile.*" (More haste, less speed). That's all he knows. But enough of these disgusting anecdotes; one can't blame the pyramids for what need never have been mentioned at all.

Slowly we climb the dusty path up to the plateau. There is nothing more childish than the desire to take a close look at what was meant to be seen from afar. Their cubic quality, which is their only attraction, is inevitably lost, and they turn into mere heaps of stones. Their imposing feature is now their brutal size. A mob of brainless slaves toiled at them for generations: a frightful thought. Once again there are vermin swarming in the cracks. The Bedouin take from four to six minutes scrambling up; one takes bets on it, sets several Ibrahims loose on the Cheops, and times them. Tourists with limbs take longer. One Ibrahim pushes him behind, another pulls in front. Below stands the anxious and greedy wife with pointed kodak.

From our hill you can see the mingling of the green fertile land and the yellow desert as far as the eye can reach. Your thoughts skip over the shimmering pools, leap over the vegetation, glide up the fortress-like mountains of white limestone, and your soul takes off into the familiar blue. A body is left behind to enjoy the sunshine in bestial content.

One can't keep it up for long. One feels something watching from behind. Six thousand years are looking over your shoulder. Let them look! The sand is older still, and even at Smithville there are antediluvian pictures. After endless ages of bestial existence form appears. Fear raised its head above the trembling creation, and turned to awe; invented God, who destroyed willfulness. Hunger seized upon their guts and became spiritual; and the longing for knowledge leapt across the ages and made off from to-day and to-morrow into eternity. Form was the miracle. It divided fact from mirage, men from apes; made a vessel for the impalpable, wrested the unity of the symbol from the complexities of nature.

Form is mightier than nature. What would the desert be without the pyramids? The desert plays with us and lets us go, turns us into dancing sunbeams. The pyramids rise like lighthouses over the sea of sand; here is the harbor.

Only when seen from near at hand do they produce the right impression: from here, where they are under our very noses. The signs of their mechanical construction, which is neither more nor less than just plain cookery, disappear into the cracks; and the impression to-day surpasses even that of the first day, since the shock of surprise has subsided and quietly taken its place among our stock of sensations.

At first I tried uneasily to come to an understanding with the material of the pyramids, and imagined that the construction of the surfaces out of hewn blocks a yard high, which now lie naked since the smooth covering slabs have been stripped away, contributed something to the effect. I took the pyramids for a pointillist

picture and the blocks for the dabs of color. Every one must manage as best he can, and it is not the first time that form has been improved by mutilation. But this torso-esthetic leads you nowhere. Damage can only pare away superfluous detail, and what superfluity can there be in a mathematical form? That is where one expects precision, and the preciser it is the better. Our picturesque leading-strings were as unknown to the Egyptians as the gramophone. The smooth impersonal envelope excluded idle naturalism, and set strict limits to the sentimental enjoyment of the ever-changing play of light on the reflecting surfaces. In point of fact our eyes can easily supply the even ashlar surfaces, and in spite of the absence of the actual materials we can imagine their effect. The effect intended by the builders of the pyramids began with this immaculately smooth surface. The splendor of the plain triangle must have been amazing and sufficient unto itself; must have repudiated all sentimental poetizing, and put a bridle upon fantasy. Not that I consider this renunciation of symbolism a positive gain. Forms with this double faculty of overwhelming the spirit at close range without deceiving it from afar have never been seen before or since. Every figure borrowed from nature gets deformed and comic at a certain distance, even with luck vanishes altogether. Therefore let every other monument yield the palm to this geometry of rule and compass and gigantic expenditure of strength and material!

Babuschka took out her camera.

"Of course!" she said.

"Cubism, after all! That's why we come to Egypt!"

She fiddled about a bit, and then snapped.

The young, especially when of the female sex, pay no attention to consequences. There is the impression; one pulls the trigger, and all one's earlier experiences take a back seat. I may remark in passing that here one finds on a grand scale the same process which on a small scale has conditioned the latest developments of Euro-

pian art. The builders of the pyramids were the precursors of Picasso.

Babuschka refused to allow any other geometrical form the same effect. Pure luck, one has to call it. But supposing I happen to prefer a cube instead of a pyramid? Nothing else could have lasted so long.

"Out of three or four geometrical forms, then, they have chosen the most rational."

"The most beautiful!" she insisted.

"Very well, the most beautiful of the three or four forms, if you can call them forms. It's all the same to me."

"How did they come to make their choice? Why mathematics at all? They might just as well have made a soft heap."

"I suppose they had tents in the desert, and the pyramids thus represent desert tents. Or else in their ambitious way they imagined they could make mountains."

That notion of mountains is commonplace, but it seems to take her fancy. Otherwise I try to overwhelm her with Egyptian dogmas, a dark business. I always take a pleasure in making people feel small. The mere love of contradiction, I suppose; or because she is wearing brown; or simply because I agree with her in point of fact, but find agreement tiresome. I expect that's the true explanation. At all events, I say, let us grant that it was only a beginning, appropriate enough five thousand years ago; and that if it had gone on in the same way, the history of mankind would have looked pretty grim.

She pretends to be deaf, and fidgets with the box. Her clothes are too absurd. One should always wear white in the desert.

It could not have begun like this; the slightest glance tells you that. Of course they must have started with soft earth, and then looked about for bricks, and then invented the stepped pyramid; and not till then can the Cheops have occurred. That was the very way Snofru built his two pyramids; the older one is stepped.

The development from a heap to a pyramid is a history in itself. The people who built it tired of living underground and cowering away from the sun, and dared to stand upright. To drive the point into the ether, to lead up to it by four equal slopes from a square base: that was an amazing achievement, if you like.

Babuschka turned fiery red, and breathless.

"It wasn't a tent at all! There was somebody inside!"

"I never said there wasn't. And anyhow that isn't incompatible with the tent notion."

"A king!"

"True."

"A great king!"

"Why, of course. I thought you didn't care for kings."

"That's how they buried their kings. . . ."

She was standing against the sun. Her skin gleamed. Cheops, too, was edged with gold. The kings themselves saw to that. Their first thought on coming to the throne was for their burial-place, and the whole land had nothing else to think or care about. Babuschka thinks that a great idea, and perhaps she is right. There can be a state religion which is the complete expression of the ruler's self-assertion. Apotheosis was consummated in the pyramid. There was some one inside. Kings are gods or nothing. This at any rate is something to begin with.

If only one could discover the meaning: the link between the understanding of yesterday, which anticipated nothing, and the understanding of to-day, which takes snapshots indiscriminately. Probably there is nothing elementary about this form; probably it marks the climax of a culture, the apex of an immense pyramid. It must be so, beyond all doubt; it must be subject to proof, like twice two, and I refuse to accept less. One can't be satisfied by guesswork and feelings; one must be certain when one thinks about form in general, not merely about this particular form. These people knew the answer; and their choice lay not among three or four alterna-

tives, but among the infinite means at their disposal. They had walked for thousands of years, taken innumerable wrong turnings, and everything primitive lay far behind. Naturally they did not choose this form consciously. Who would? They discovered the pyramid in a flash as their concept of value—the value of the king, the value of the people, value in general—attained its highest point. These men must have had a divine sense of proportion in everything. While the faces of other peoples were distorted with rage and fear, theirs smiled. Their habit of life must have been exemplary.

It is feeble to sympathize with the hundred thousand slaves. As though their work on the pyramids were less worthy of human dignity than the modern free man with his obsession for a drill and its thirty-and-threefold increase of capacity per minute! In no Versailles is our pleasure in contemplating the façade diminished by a glimpse at the spiritual state of its builders. Not even at Versailles! Probably the so-called slaves struggled to get at the pyramid and went singing to their work. Each carried his stone to the sanctuary, and the honor of being purveyor in ordinary to the god lightened his burden. What the fool to-day calls slavery was for them a happy comradeship. There is no difference between them and the Gothic masons. No subjective difference, hardly any objective, either.

Is that so, or am I romancing? I wish one knew something about those who are past and gone; one's conjectures are always running up against obstacles. When Babuschka pretends there is nothing important except the pyramids, she is the mouthpiece of that accursed cubism: the reaction against a complex Europe (which she has never known) towards a joy in the primitive, in the clean new page. She is young, and all is well. But I start at the other end. Is that what it leads me to? Do the pyramids really attract me, or are they a mere temporary expedient coming at the psychological moment when our art is exhausted by the hairsplitting contests of the sated spectators? Am I a snob, a senseless degenerate glutton,

or did they really reach a climax here long before the beginning of European ascendancy?

This one must admit in a metaphorical sense, along with so much else besides, for one cannot demonstrate a pyramid by means of a pyramid. And to the realm of metaphor we must also assign the exclusion of a history which does not admit of ocular demonstration.

Things looked different once. In front of the pyramids lay gateways, and funerary temples now mostly destroyed or still buried in the sand. We have seen Borchardt's reconstruction. Thus, or approximately thus, it may once have been. The pyramid was introduced to the eye by means of subsidiary buildings, which gave it a soothing effect. Now nothing introduces it. Even in the old days, however, the complex did not weaken the effect of the pyramid, but rather corroborated it. The buildings in front consist of straight avenues, right angles, cubes, massive and strictly geometrical; in any case they flank one side only, and that the side where the ground slopes away, so that they are cut off when viewed from a distance. On the other sides the pyramid stood free, and towered so immeasurably above the complex that the buildings in the foreground became quite subsidiary. From a certain distance the impression must have been practically the same as it is to-day.

The foolish question occurs to me: why did nobody paint the pyramids? Perhaps few painters were up to the task. No age but ours possesses—or rather possessed—the necessary means of representation. How ludicrous to think that we possessed it once, and it has now slipped by. The fertile soil between the two deserts would have been the very thing for several Frenchman of a past generation, and they would not have disdained to exchange even the Seine for the Nile. There was one who even knew the pyramids, actually the pyramids, but only one: Cézanne, the cubist, would have gone mad over these mathematics, and he did catch a breath of this solid mystery when he brooded on these matters, long ago. But it never really came his way. Such people don't travel; there's no reason why

they should. They sit at home at Aix, year in and year out, contentedly enough, and build their own pyramids. The people who come here are the Mr. Coolmans and the learned grave-diggers. Flaubert was here, and journeyed up the Nile, and wrote wonderful letters about the habits of the natives and about his own boredom. Not a word about ancient Egypt. Georg Ebers was here, and wrote novels. One would like to find co-jurors, to encourage one to admiration.

We tramp through the sand round the Sphinx. The hindquarters are conspicuously wasted: a real war-lion. The atmosphere has worn to a skeleton the rock out of which the colossus is carved. Cubism triumphs. The purely structural artistic form, fashioned out of hewn stone dragged to the spot, lasts better than the reproduction of nature in organic material. The form of the forequarters, too, is in a poor way nowadays. The face wears a wooden muzzle while they are dusting it. The neck won't hold out much longer. On the ground below hundreds of natives swarm round with little baskets of sand on their heads, singing and laughing; they goose-step to the dump-carts on the narrow-gauge track, empty their baskets anywhere, and go back to the sand singing. They have carried away multitudes of basketsful, and they are on the point of disengaging the Sphinx once more; till recently it was buried up to its neck in the desert. It has taken the best part of forty years this time; the first time it was ordered by Thuthmosis IV, three and a half thousand years ago, as the result of a dream he had as a prince, which promised him the throne as a reward. Once again it will all come to nothing unless they build high walls round the colossus and bury it alive. That is how it looks now. The whole body is now free in front. We climbed up on to the jutting lion's paws and sat with the Sphinx in a hole. To get a distant view we mounted the gateway near by, and saw heaven knows how far.

The Mamelukes used the face as a target for their cannon, and did no end of damage. The lion's mane is torn away; the nose and

eyes are holes, and you need all your imagination to catch the resemblance to Chefren. But there the Sphinx reposes, a more corporeal being than any of the noisy active creatures, body and face in one, who clamber all over it. Soon you notice nothing else, and the tumult is stilled by the soothing gaze of the watcher who lies there alone. There is astonishing power in that gaze. The colossus has nothing to do but gaze. That is why he was put there, an immense body with equal paws stretched out in front. As a matter of fact, one need not look at them; they are almost too much. The built-up stones, themselves probably a restoration of the remote past, make the limbs look slightly inorganic. The bust is enough. It spreads out wide enough to support the enormous volume of the head.

The pyramids strain your eyes. The significance which their surfaces fail to yield is concentrated in all its cumulative force upon the human face; it fills every gap in the pitted stone, smoothes the corroded surface, restores what has rotted away, and supplies in a moment even the lines that are barely hinted at. One accepts the oval face unquestioningly. Perhaps a rock which mere chance had given the form of a Sphinx would become a god of its own accord. A couple of hundred paces away there is a rock which remains untouched, the counterpart, perhaps, of that which Chefren had carved into the Sphinx. It is full of fantastic faces. But the mighty form soon drives such fancies back to the regions of romance. The Sphinx was fashioned as cleanly as the pyramids.

They used nature, the organic rock, and the forms of nature which they had seen, like a face, a royal lion-wig, or the prostrate body of a beast. What they made of them unsettles one like a personal gesture. In those dark ages nature was a servant, nothing more. Only the blood royal could treat her thus, and men of dazzling courage, who knew what to expect of her. Here alone, and nowhere else, could the Sphinx lie, placed thus before the pyramid, not too far and not too near, exactly at this height, where the more

animated form of the great triangle could not get in the way and served to set off the figure in relief. The site of the pyramids had been chosen in such a way that one must give the builders credit for having corrected in advance the effect of foreshortening from that point of view. It seems to depend upon the diagonal system of the pyramids and the lie of the land. In the Sphinx they renounced mathematics entirely. It was hard to solve the problem of how to subordinate a monument of so decided a form. The pyramids stood, as stand they must, upon the plateau at the edge of the desert, on the sun's parade-ground. They immediately created a situation; but this contradicted all forms derived from organic life, could endure nothing but geometry. Now, man, invent something else! Create a new form! Bring forth a new fruit from thy loins! Set up a cyclops, a giant Venus, a lion, something like a couchant lion! If you look through the list of images of lions, everything European is ruled out at once. Our bloodthirstiest beast would have turned into a kitten. It is past imagining what Michelangelo would have made of the rock. Our geniuses need a good closed studio in order to let themselves go. Out of doors they dissipate their energy. Only in a box do they turn on their full strength, though at a pinch they can furnish a square between houses.

The influence of the climate, one says. The contemplation of the desert widens the outlook. It sounds plausible, but I cannot discover why the widening of the vision leads one straight to the Sphinx. At a pinch one can arrive at an understanding with the pyramids, whose geometry there is no gainsaying. The system suited a rigid autocracy, and a satisfactory scheme was immediately forthcoming. Here we have the cold realism of an intellectual construction: the pyramid with countless stones and one point. There we have a free organism, life and movement, an appeal to the Muses, Europe. Would that they were buried in the pyramids!

But when one looks further and encounters the Sphinx, the argument falls to the ground. They could do both, then; and in the

same breath, moreover. The simultaneousness is the most puzzling part of the business. If only a couple of thousand years had intervened! But no, the same Chefren who raised the middle pyramid built the Sphinx. We know this not only from the investigations of the learned, but actually from the evidence of our own senses. Our desert-widened outlook cannot help noticing that the form of the organic being in no wise contradicts the geometrical figure, but rather proceeds from it. The two steep wings of the tattered lion-wig run parallel to the right and left slopes of the pyramid, and if you prolong them they intersect over the middle of the head. The tapering shoulders echo the same shape and the prostrate body fills the whole base of the triangle. The Sphinx is the offspring of the pyramid.

But presumably the pyramid contained a great deal besides this. How did they arrive at this organism? Why do we never for a moment notice the arbitrary caprice of putting a human head on a lion's body? And that too when in our own box-art we deprecate the slightest fantasy *à la* Böcklin and even in Greek art we put up with such compilations only under protest. In spite of a familiarity based on its frequent occurrence in classical poetry, the appearance of a centaur in relief remains a trifle uncomfortable; and nobody has ever tried to take the chimæra seriously. Why do we never feel inclined to discuss the organism of the Sphinx? We are never given an opportunity of regarding the colossus as merely decorative, or of endowing it with an obscure mysticism. Its function is to express imperious might. It always exercises the positive function of watcher, and its posture makes us feel subservient. We regard this monument just as we regard one of our native symbols of manly worth that has received the devotion of a great age. The same feeling that inspires us before the rider of Bamberg enforces our devotion here. It is merely stronger. One must take into account the dimensions of the desert in measuring the difference.

Till this moment I have armed myself against superlatives and

fought for Europe like a brave tin-soldier. But the old box is tottering; the Sphinx answers more than one can ask it. Isn't this already a sufficient ocular demonstration?

Babuschka maintains that we really ought to go to the museum. All sorts of things might be cleared up in that way. I don't agree; I am here for the sake of my kidneys, not to encumber myself with new histories.

Without a doubt our monuments lose by contrast with these; they come to lack consistency. It's a question of site. We have no desert to widen our outlook. Taine would give us all sorts of information of a geographical nature, and then somebody else would draw the opposite conclusions from the same arguments. The desert is a big concern. If it really prevents a comparison between the Sphinx and Michelangelo, Egypt as well is beyond discussion. Till yesterday I maintained it stoutly, and in time to come I shall maintain it again. One cannot maintain it often enough, but it won't do. There are dozens of reasons, of course, why Michelangelo made the Moses and the Egyptians made the Sphinx; and the desert is one of them. That means as little to us as the functions of our skin, which relieves our kidneys without preventing us from indulging in devilment or doing heroic deeds. If Egypt were really out of the picture, we should mistake the Sphinx for an ethnographic monstrosity, and it would never occur to us to consider it as the formal expression of a complete value, a value which corresponds exactly to the increase in our stock of ideas, filling a vessel which had been fashioned before ever Egypt existed, and which had remained empty. There it is, the emptiness we bring with us, the sudden assuaging of our secret dissatisfaction and desires. It is as though we always felt a presentiment of every sensation, however new, and yet were ignorant of how to find it.

The sun sets. We climb our hill behind the gate of Chefren. On the right the sun tinges the untouched rock that might have been turned into a Sphinx. In the plain the water gleams on the flooded tilth. The desert widens our outlook. Yonder, on the other side of

the Nile, the long spine of the Mokattam catches the light. The Mokattam is the mountain from which they brought the limestone for the pyramids.

"The pink house!" Babuschka exclaims.

In the Bedouin village on the outskirts of the plateau of the pyramids there is a cottage painted pink. She might just as well have called my attention to a pretty necktie. The desert does not seem to have widened her outlook especially.

"Do look," Babuschka urges me, "over there, just between the two brown ones, to the left of the three palms."

"Lovely," I say without moving. But she won't leave me alone. Everybody wants to patent his own effects. And as a matter of fact the little touch of pink is perfectly charming.

We pass the gate of Chefren and look down. Enormous oblong granite blocks belonging to gigantic inarticulate pillars. No capital, no ornament, not the slightest curvature; only the material, grave and positive. They must once have been polished like a safe in a bank. In the passages in front of the pillars stood lifesize stone figures of Chefren which, I am told, are now in the museum.

Babuschka called to me: "Do look at the Mokattam! It's disappearing!" The Mokattam provided the limestone for the pyramids. Last Sunday we were up there with old Rennebaum. Nearly two and a half million blocks of stone were used for the Cheops, each weighing many tons. A hundred thousand workmen were busy with one single pyramid for twenty years. I cannot take my eyes off it. Incidentally it is worth noticing how much the mosaic of cubic blocks, and the play of ochre tones turning from clay to gold against the blue ground, add to the effect of a pyramid. Enormous tracts of furrowed yellow climb up into heaven.

"Ah, you Mokattam! . . ."

The crest towers above. The stone has turned to glittering glass. A whole town with walls of glass, with glass palaces and glass domes. The rainbow glitters in countless windows. Crystals dance in the air. You strain your ears to catch the tinkling sound.

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## AT THE CONVENT

WE have left Mr. Coolman and the Behn family, and have installed ourselves on Borchardt's advice among the Catholic sisters near the Bab el Luk station. The sisters keep a German school and hospice here; for which reason it is the chosen port of call for learned Germans. You enter by a pleasant court, with trees and an arbor, and knock at the old lodge which was once a harem. We live in the tower of the new schoolhouse, and have the use of a loggia and two big light rooms whose furniture we have supplemented with our luggage. In the bedroom Babuschka has turned one big trunk and two little ones and a hatbox into a washstand shaped like a stepped pyramid; it tumbles down from time to time, as Babuschka cannot be induced to follow the example of the Egyptians and put the big cube at the bottom. From morn till night the sisters are busy with the schoolchildren and their guests; it is divinely comfortable. The only person on our floor is the Syrian priest: black eyes, curly black hair, long black gown. He dines by himself, and seems to be entirely given up to prayer and spiritual exercises. At six o'clock in the morning he reads mass to the Sisters of St. Carlo Borromeo. We treat him with shy respect.

We sit down to meals in the old lodge, a dozen Germans all told, and an American from Toledo, Ohio—a quiet person. He is on a world-tour and is going on to India next. He attends closely to our

conversations without understanding a word we say. As I was arguing just now with the blond doctor about Schiller and Goethe—a very deep conversation it was, according to Dohn—he inquired whether the works of these two poets were given in dramatic form also in Germany. In America they are only given in the theater, which strikes him as a hazardous proceeding. One cannot trust one's countrymen in such matters. He has very kindly invited Dohn and ourselves, and indeed most of the others as well, to go and see him in Ohio.

Beside the American sit the married couple from Krostewitz, near Leipzig. The husband has made over his possessions in advance to the town of Leipzig, and buys a baby hippo every day. He is a collector. His wife finds Egypt dirty and doesn't feel happy here. There is something Jewish in the Egyptian atmosphere, she maintains, something fundamentally Jewish, and that she can't abide. Babuschka boils over inside. Joshua Dohn presides at the head of the table. On his left is Dettenberg, the political economist from Altenessen, who has lived here a long while and who is amiability personified. He has promised to explain to me how matters stand with the German Union here, although he has really undertaken not to talk about such things any more. Incidentally, a German Club, in addition to the German Union, had recently been founded. There are two hundred Germans in Cairo, including the waiters. Next the Westphalian at the head of the table sits a Catholic parish-priest who has been driven out of Upper Silesia, and has devoted himself to missionary work in Egypt; he is a pleasant man with webbed hands. Then comes the quiet Swabian, the Orientalist. He talks quite naturally in the Stuttgart dialect, and is studying ancient Arabic. He is going to take us on Sunday to the Mokattam. I have never come across such a collection of pleasant people. Apart from Krostewitz, the tone reminds one of the Germans in Rome a hundred years ago.

The doyen of the assembly is Joshua Dohn, a white-bearded man

from the Baltic provinces, a poet and a philosopher. He is reconstructing the mysteries of ancient Egypt and is a master of the philosophy of numbers. The whole cosmos is bound up in the numerical relations of the pyramids. By a simple multiplication of the diameter of the Cheops you arrive at the radius of the earth, and the weight of the pyramid is an exact fraction of that of the earth. According to Dohn, the Egyptians have expressed their philosophy in numbers, and the fundamental laws of their manners and customs are based upon simple addition and subtraction. By means of a somewhat longer calculation you get from Chefren to the world war. Gypsies, it seems, learned the symbols of Egypt from old playing-cards. The blond doctor, my neighbor, who is studying Egyptian history, is inclined to be sceptical about these notions. I agree, and he knows that I agree, but we don't protest and avoid catching each other's eye at such moments, when we share a guilty feeling together. Occasionally a cloud flits across Dohn's noble brow. We must attend. Dohn warns us against Nile-water; we mustn't touch salad, but at this point we refuse to be put upon. He knows the whole history of Rasputin, the Russian mystic and libertine. The conversation is always very stimulating, and we are glad to have escaped from the hotel. From our roof we can see the pyramids and the Mokattam. We take sun-baths. It's only a fortnight to Christmas.

MOSQUES. At breakfast at Herr von K.'s house, when the subject of the mosques arose, the bomb burst. The subject is the favorite one here, for its grateful shade envelops all such questions as to whether England or France could damage or endanger our present parlous condition. The words flow of their own accord, and one goes home contented. The tone of the conversation rises immediately after the sole, which is served here baked in puff-paste. Röhricht, the greatest authority on Islamic art, who is excavating the tombs of the Khalifs this winter, sang the praises of the mosques in terms

of the highest enthusiasm. He had been invited to say his piece, and only a tactless fool would ever have dared to contradict him. Babuschka is to blame. To all appearances she was in the company of important persons for the first time in her life, looked quite charming into the bargain, and never opened her mouth once for the first half hour. Suddenly she was inspired. She threw out some remark that Röhricht picked up, and caught me a whack on the nose: it wasn't exactly rude—merely her usual excess of tolerance: "I wish you joy of them!" What annoyed me was the presence of three professional Egyptologists, one French and the other two English, who were prepared to conceal their calling to the last gasp. Oh, there was nothing like mosques . . . charming indeed . . . the pyramids were mere observation-posts compared to the mosque of Mohammed Ali.

I took some time to produce my objections in a concise form, for there was no denying the atmospheric capacities of mosques, nor the picturesqueness of their silhouettes either. I had also to thank the Syrian priest for a glimpse at the beautiful manuscripts of the Koran in the library. It was a pity to drag in the Syrian priest, as it involved admitting that without the kind offices of this excellent person we should have missed seeing these objects of the first importance. I praised Arabic calligraphy enthusiastically: its fantastic ornament, its abundant incident. If it were possible to reckon as art a purely ornamental manifestation whose appeal to our way of thinking must needs be somewhat limited, one might make bold to maintain, etc. In short, I did everything that a man could do, and blurted out, in what I hoped was an aside, my regrets that these charms had not been confined to Arabic writing.

Röhricht reacted like a father whose daughter had just been publicly deflowered, but managed somehow to preserve his mild demeanor.

"My dear friend," he lisped, "you are forgetting Islamic architecture!" No: I hadn't forgotten it. I only wish I had. It was really

more than I could bear to see those three professional Egyptologists sitting there, filling their bellies. Out I came again with the atmosphere and the picturesqueness and all the other tomfooleries. If you succeeded in overlooking the handling of the material, which never caught the character of the stone, there was still the intolerable topheaviness. The turrets and the minarets! And look at the way they placed the windows! Not the faintest idea of the functions of a column. Everything structural turned to ornament. Far be it from me to hurt any one's feelings. Owing to favorable influences several of the Cairo mosques had contrived to acquire a modicum of structural stability.

Röhricht's tall figure bent in anger.

"And what, pray, do you refer to as a modicum?"

He had the whole company behind him, of course. I prostituted myself with a glance in the direction of the Egyptologists; I might just as well have turned to the blacks.

"I was comparing it with European architecture," I replied, with the same painful amiability, "since, after all, we are Europeans."

Röhricht's dromedary-lips drooped, and let loose a history of architectural development, from which we inferred that partly by direct and partly by indirect means Europe was head over ears in debt to the genius of Islam. Though he admired the spontaneity of my reactions, he must insist that we were dealing with facts which mere sensibility was unable sufficiently to appreciate.

I still held my own to some extent.

"We must not get entangled in details," I remarked icily. "The fundamental principles of European architecture were established long before Islam made its appearance. That we know for a fact. But that is of little consequence here, where we have examples of a native architecture of extreme antiquity under our very noses." Here again I couldn't refrain from glancing in the direction of the Egyptologists over my shoulder. One of the Englishmen was just swallowing a mouthful of salad.

"The pyramids, I suppose you mean?" Röhricht smiled.

At this juncture a blonde German woman from Riga, who had been gazing at Röhricht with rapt adoration, mentioned the stalactites. Stalactites in Arabic architecture are Röhricht's real passion. He smiled indulgently, as much as to say that there was no need to disturb such sanctities. But Babuschka appeared to misunderstand the word; or else perhaps she had never heard of stalactites, and concluded that they were casting aspersions on my honesty. Anybody could say that, she remarked tartly. At this my gall overflowed. I spoke my mind at last, and declared that all the mosques in Cairo, which we had seen at lightning speed under the guidance of Ibrahim, were arrant rubbish. Babuschka nudged me under the table, to bring me to my senses, but it merely had the effect of opening the flood-gates to their fullest extent. It was incredible, in the presence of the temples of ancient Egypt, that anybody could take such garish haberdashery seriously.

Röhricht turned scarlet. But nothing could stop me now. I fell to abusing the Alhambra, upon which, as every one knew, he had written an enormous tome. The Arabic style was marked out as the perfect decoration for Turkish baths. I did not aim all this at Röhricht, however, but at the three Egyptologists, who took no notice of it. Röhricht can't help behaving like a kidney-specialist who is trying to cure toothache with white of egg. It isn't fair to blame him for the hopeless specialization of our science, of which he is the victim. At least he loves and cherishes his stalactites, like the priest from Spitzweg with his snake-cactus, and extracts the last drop of satisfaction out of them. The stalactites give him a meaning and a shape; and one can always consult him. The three explorers explored nothing, on the other hand; they belonged to Egypt only in office-hours, and after that they ate whatever you set before them: went in mufti, in fact.

A singular result, which rejoiced my patriotic sense. Learned Germans can be mummified by Egypt and become as dark as

Pharaohs, but they don't turn into civil servants. As soon as they appear on the scene, you know it. One of the Englishmen had the cheek to nod to me when I referred to the Alhambra, just as he had nodded to Röhricht a moment before, out of mere conventional stupidity. That of course infuriated me, and I started hammering at Röhricht again.

A foreign dignitary tactfully attempted to lead the conversation on to the animals in the Cairo zoo, and Babuschka made some remark about the curious baboon in this institution. Though it played up to the social effort on the part of the dignitary, it all came to nothing and fell completely flat.

Afterwards we sat for hours at a stretch on our loggia, and dis-coursed upon the vulgarity of being unable to distinguish between mosques and pyramids. It was a magnificent night. The starlight almost blistered you. We scolded our consciences and felt ourselves carried up to heaven.

**THE SYRIAN PRIEST.** The Syrians are a wide-awake people and control the business of Cairo. Our neighbor is much more accessible than we had imagined, talks French, and has written a book on the relations of Islam with Christianity which has been reviewed in the orientalist monthlies at Leipzig. Sometimes he comes in to ask us the time, as his clock is being mended. Somebody gave him a bottle of hairwash, and he fortunately asked Babuschka if it was good to drink. The day before yesterday he took us into a second library, which a pasha had given to the state, near the Muski, the Bazaar street. We didn't find any books, however; merely coffee to drink and delicious cigarettes to smoke. He introduced us to the pasha and a whole crowd of notables. When Babuschka took a fancy to the costume of one of the notables, a wonderful piece of striped silk, they immediately summoned, from the neighborhood, a dealer, who produced enchanting patterns which would do perfectly for Babuschka's room. The Syrian priest, however, whispered to us not

to buy anything, as he could take us to a better shop in the Muski. It turned out that we knew the shop already. Ibrahim, our ragged mentor of past days, had taken us there; and there occurred the painful scene when we were made aware of his misdemeanors. Unfortunately the stuffs were nothing like so beautiful, and didn't feel so soft, as they contained cotton, and weren't the same blue as the other. Our friend, the Syrian priest, considered them better and more durable, as they were of Syrian make. It seemed all right to me, but Babuschka had set her heart on the others. The obliging people kept bringing out new bundles, but there was nothing of the pattern we had seen in the library below. Every time our friend declared they were the best that was to be had in Cairo. It seemed rude to give the people so much trouble, and to disillusion our friend into the bargain. He made them show us silk costumes which Babuschka liked just as little. Such moments, trivial as they are, can become positively painful; and I was glad when we had turned our back on the bazaar. We returned to Bab el Luk, and praised the weather. Every day was a perfect gift. The Syrian priest's gentle features wore a preoccupied look. When we had reached our floor he invited us with friendly gestures into his room, which was full of boxes. We didn't venture to look behind the bed. We were in his cell for the first time. He showed us a couple of illuminated Korans, not as fine, of course, as those in the library, but tasteful and interesting enough. For the one we liked best he had been offered thirty pounds.

When we were back in our room, Babuschka began to grin.

"Why are you laughing?" I asked.

"Nothing." She went on grinning.

I sat down to the writing-table and began a letter to Hans. We had squandered another whole day on trivialities. The smile was still on her lips.

"What *are* you laughing at?"

She went to the door, which was still open, and shut it. Then

she laid her finger to her lips and pointed to the wall of the Syrian priest's room. I can't endure such cryptic signs.

"Don't do it!" she said.

"What do you mean?"

She nodded towards the wall, and whispered: "Ibrahim!"

Women are dreadful. The worst of it was, though, that the same thought had struck my mind a long time ago.

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## SAKKARA

As we didn't go to Gizeh yesterday, we made another attempt to-day. The blond doctor had warned us, as a matter of fact, that the museum was only open for a couple of hours; with the result that it was already shut when we arrived.

At Gizeh we met a chauffeur who was going in the direction of Sakkara. Up to this moment we had seen the pyramids of Sakkara only in the distance. It was a pretty drive along the canal. The irrigation-wheels of today are exactly like those of three thousand years ago. It's queer, looking at them from a motor; as though one had come from another planet.

All about here between the palm trees, so they say, we are now standing where once Memphis stood. The scanty remains, the two fallen colossi of Rameses, produce a devastating effect. Maybe they are beautiful and count among the miracles of art. Nobody knows. One can't scramble over a figure and examine it all at the same time. Why don't they set the torsos upright? There is enough of them left. What a way of looking after works of art! If the Frenchman and the two Englishmen have been lately turned on to attend to them, it isn't so surprising, perhaps. I wish they would take the colossi out of sight, and bury them. That's what the Egyptians would have done.

In the desert near Sakkara we counted, I fancy, ten pyramids. We

didn't know where to begin. But then we came upon a couple of tombs of the Old Kingdom, and it's not too much to say that we have been in the Old Kingdom. In tombs where you don't feel entombed: tombs without mold, without worms, without ghosts, habitable tombs. At first Babuschka wasn't keen on going inside, but finally she got accustomed to the idea. In ancient Egypt the dead occupied whole villas with numerous rooms, antechambers, reception rooms, halls and closets, whose appearance made a vivid impression on us. They took years, even decades, to build such houses and become quite used to them. They grew up alongside their life out of doors, and the events of their lives were recorded in pictures which contrived to keep them very much alive even when they were dead. All the episodes of life recur on the tinted low-reliefs on the walls: the pursuit of wealth, sowing, harvesting, garnering of the grain and fruit, baking, herding the different kinds of cattle, milking, slaughtering, fishing; journeys on the Nile, hunting, the receipt of customs, the tribute of the peasants, men and women, the products of the craftsmen, dancing and games. And always the master in the middle, tall of stature, noble in mien, tranquil and affable; such was Ptahotep, a minister in the fifth dynasty, such was Ti, the master-builder of the royal pyramids, such was Mereruka.

The people who built the pyramids could do that, too. Geometry could make its peace with the supple play of line in these pictures, even though it be but child's play, able to express itself only in the one dimension of a profile. They look for positions which can be realized in a profile, make the outline as lively as possible; and you get the illusion that the world has only one face which you can draw or model with a light touch on the accommodating limestone. It is a world seen in parallel planes, very simple, easily grasped, and yet alive. The repetition of detail is intended for the rhythm and at the same time it enhances the illusion. The emotion always goes beyond the style somewhat. What restrains it is not precept, at all

events not a precept dictated by theology. There are no hieratic receipts here. The restraint lies merely in the childish lack of expertness. A simplicity schooled but not crushed by craftsmanship directs the chisel: a simplicity which belongs not to the fifth dynasty, and not even to Egypt alone, although the motifs naturally reflect the country of the Nile. We catch a reflection of our own simplicity when we were young and used to play with the round drum which was open at the top and had long slits in the side and was meant to spin round. You stuck strips of paper inside, and when you spun the drum round the figures danced. The strips were not half so beautiful as these, of course, and there weren't any hippopotamuses. We had jumping soldiers in spiked helmets and generals on horseback. It is a foolish thought; but there is something of our own childhood in the pleasure of contemplating the childhood of five thousand years ago.

A couple of thick lines suddenly hold up the game. The sharp arabesque of a mysterious man, tall and naked, the master of the tomb. This is no child's drawing. The complete firmness of the outline dispels all recollections of our childhood. The feelings it arouses in us are quite different. Where have we felt such rhythms before? Surely there are traces of this nobility in Piero della Francesca.

Such were the pictures that contributed to make the tomb memorable. The mixture of nobility and childishness must have turned their minds beyond the thought of death; for it was full of poetry. It is strange how the unaccustomed idea takes hold of us, how we divine in this art the easy fulfillment of the simple wish to continue this life beyond the grave. Possibly the delicacy of the balance was responsible for it. A little more external reality, and the simplicity would have seemed foolish; a little more style, and we should have called it archaism. The striking thing about this sepulchral art is its power of staying in the mind. The context, whose circumstances we know, may very likely have contributed tangible suggestions of

an external and accidental kind; but nothing interrupts the untroubled train of our thoughts. Our memories take shape here not at the hands of objects only, but also at the bidding of the tumultuous life around us. These reliefs awaken such memories with a confidential smile. Art and man must then have lived on very intimate terms, and we, the late-born inhabitants of another quarter of the globe, succeed in establishing immediate relations with them. How does that come about? One would suppose that in any case the cult, of which we know absolutely nothing, must play a part in it: the mysteries, of which Joshua Dohn talks so unintelligibly, the whole dim mass of Egyptian mythology. And even if the cult declined later and lost its meaning, it must have lorded it in all its might once upon a time, as it does everywhere in the early days.

It is even odder that we never felt a trace of it in all those pictures. Not a single detail alludes to any such mystification and hocus-pocus. There is nothing that a child of to-day couldn't understand at a glance. Can these people have been free of dogma? Was hocus-pocus nothing to them?

In the light of historical tradition we cannot call them godless; and so we must infer from their emancipated art that they were on extremely intimate terms with their god or gods, and that the divine being lay within them and never oppressed them at all. They overcame the fear of death. They had no textbooks of doctrinaire moralizing. Their pictures are quite untendencious. They seem to have known neither heaven nor hell, neither saints nor sinners, and life unfolded itself without miracles. There is no retribution, no last judgment threatening them. Evidently they required no such repressions.

I have seen relief-slabs from these tombs in European museums. There are some of this very period in Berlin. They come back to us afterwards, and I remember the friendly recognition one felt for them in passing. One ascribed it to some felicitous turn of style. In such matters the museum cannot help giving the object a false

emphasis. We only respond to childish things when fashion or fancy trick us into doing so and are slow to perceive the qualities of a relief which misuses painting. In consequence these tomb-reliefs are actually more intelligible to our unprejudiced instincts, if one can call them instincts, than our own altarpieces. You can't ever quite break through the hocus-pocus of the Sienese, not even at Siena. The cult of the Madonna in a Simone Martini attenuates the style to something like an incorporeal elegance. Or else you break through too easily and wilt at the aridity of the formula; it becomes a mere number, and nothing more. The limitations of the motif played a great part, I know, in the development of our art; but the whole outlook, which is inevitably involved with a doomed culture and which must thus fence in its impulse towards sportiveness, is equally limited. The prophylactic measures of Catholicism lie behind it. The childishness which the Egyptians poured out into nature can only emerge among us by means of a thorny and circuitous path. One day this circuitousness must be recognized as a cramping restriction and be overridden. We have the Madonna, and we love her. Isis and Osiris mean nothing to us; and yet we find the images made to do honor to Isis and Osiris often mean more to us than the glorifications of the Madonna.

Egyptian art, as Babuschka profoundly remarked, is a remarkable affair, and one really ought to do something about it.

At Marietta House we ran across the Behns, the whole tribe of them, with a numerous suite, sumptuous and noisy, in three motors. They were just confabulating about the best place to have breakfast. Herr Behn voted for an al fresco meal; Frau Behn was in favor of the restaurant at Marietta House. The suite had various opinions. The luggage was waiting in one of the cars, in charge of Jean, the valet. As we beat a hasty retreat, Herr Behn appeared and called out in a nasal, imperious voice: "Jean, serve it in the desert!"

We breakfasted on the loggia with a geologist from Vienna who was looking for stones in the desert, and poured forth our enthu-

siasm to him. He alluded to the full length figure of Ti, from his tomb, and now in the museum, as something well known to us. I nodded, like one to whom Ti was as familiar as his own trouser-pocket. Naturally we didn't let on how lazy we'd been.

Probably this figure of Ti is the key to the whole concern. The geologist knew Molls and had just come from Ceylon.

Afterwards we wandered into the Serapeum: another picture altogether. The Serapeum is the burying place of the sacred beast, a large subterranean arrangement with long passages and chambers. You visit them by artificial light. The mummified bulls of Apis were laid up in granite sarcophagi of enormous size, and received the adoration of the people. The bull was identified with Osiris and became the god of the dead. We are enveloped in an impenetrable fog of Egyptian hocus-pocus; and want nothing so much as to be out in the upper air once more.

The tomb of Ti and the Serapeum! We had learnt to know a smiling humanity which turned the remembrance of every living thing into a light rampart against death, and we had found much in common with them. But there was another side to the picture. They adored dead cattle. What induced them to do it? Brute strength, a fixed impulse towards copulation? One of Vitzthum's herd broke loose; and we children ran screaming home. I couldn't stop screaming for three whole days. Another bull was led along the road from Bozen to Eppan by four peasants who were holding it in with ropes. It planted itself in the middle of the road and refused to budge, but stood looking at us with its little eyes. At the Corrida at San Sebastian a Jura steer vaulted over the parapet and gored a gay fellow who had just been waltzing with it. Fuentes made light work of him, and with a tinkle of bells the draught horses galloped the pitiable carcass out of the arena.

They worshipped cats, crocodiles, and snakes; and also the dung-beetle, the scarabæus. One animal worshipped another. For

this reason they were never cannibals. And this isn't the greatest mystery, either.

Our return was agitated. Babuschka was in a temper, and I was vexed with her for forgetting the thermos. It was such a good thermos, too.

It's no good making a tragedy out of these incidents. Where's the good of being depressed by the Serapeum? We can have tea on the terrace at Mena House and buy a new thermos when we get back to Cairo. What is Egypt to us?

Our experience in the tomb of Ti was too unexpected, too quickly over and done with. Probably the reliefs, torn from their context, have been overpraised. If we could see them again now, we should very likely think them tedious and silly. Possibly the sarcophagi in the Serapeum have their good points. There's something for you to think about! How comes it that we can react esthetically in the tomb of Ti, and only ethnographically a step or two farther on? Can it be that those sarcophagi are really masterpieces of Egyptian art? One mustn't despair because sacred beasts were in a position to plunge men into an orgy of creation resulting in these extraordinary sarcophagi.

It suddenly occurred to Babuschka that although the tomb of Ti and the Serapeum are quite close to each other in space, a very considerable stretch of time separates them, for Ti belonged to the Old Kingdom and the Serapeum to the New. A trifle of a thousand years or so divides the two buildings.

That does help a bit. We cast about in the history of the world for examples of what such intervals of time really mean. One need only consider what a thousand years means in Greece. Not only religion and ethics and even culture, but the whole structure of the race, have dissolved. The race is born, ripens, ages, petrifies, and disappears within such a period; it wins and loses everything. In Egypt there was always something left over.

Perhaps they took it less literally than we suppose; perhaps they

regarded the beasts as symbols just as we regard eagles, lions and doves. They may have found it easier to equate them with a plastic formula, to turn them into symbolic shape. Their relations with animals may have been much more human than ours; certainly their worship had little enough in common with our prayers.

It is odd how difficult it is to silence an impression which we owe to the eye by reflecting upon it. One listens to the comparisons, convinces oneself of their accuracy, and yet refuses to believe a word of it. It is impossible to comprehend the nature of things of which one has no experience, even if one were able to analyze down to the smallest detail.

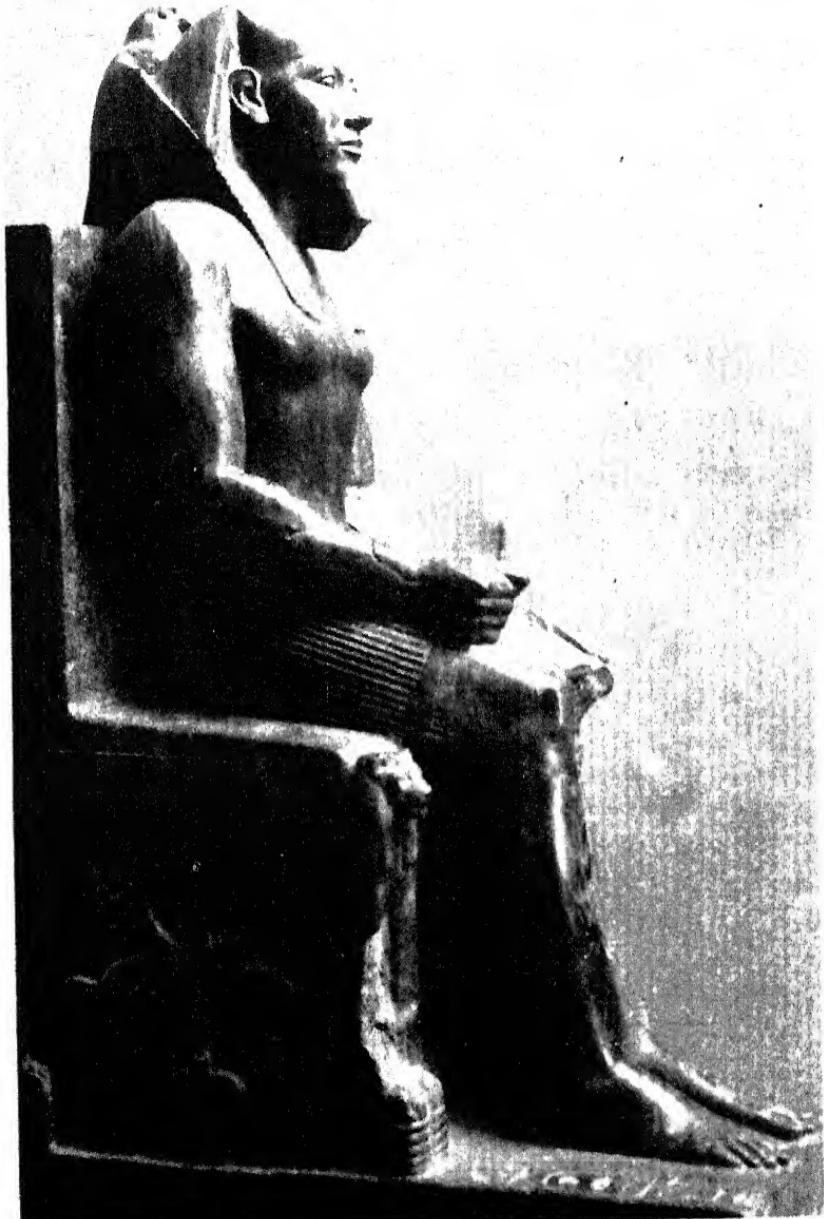
We returned at the right moment to Gizeh, and rested; in the shadow of the great triangle one comes to one's senses. From our post by the gate of Chefren we saw the sun set. Again the Mokattam was aflame; and when a couple of clouds appeared in the sky the play took a more dramatic turn than ever. The whole ghostly city with its glassy walls and domes was on fire. But the Sphinx watched unceasingly before the stony tent. The work of man surpassed in reality all the wonders of nature, and we forgot the bulls.



Limestone Statue of Ti.



Limestone Statue of Renofer.



Diorite Statue of Chefren.

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## THE PEOPLE OF THE PYRAMIDS

THE people of ancient Egypt are presented to us in various guises. Sometimes they appear as standing figures, sometimes as mummies. You see things here that you never saw before; and now and then you are hard put to it to keep your face from setting into that expression of utter boredom which habitually comes over the visitor in a museum. The mummy-trick outdoes every fantastic device of the modern film. Imagine it: there, on the ground floor, are various statues of the great Rameses; upstairs, the same man's corpse tidily put away under glass. Sensation swarms up the walls! The unpacked mummies are genuine, no doubt, and properly identified, but you wouldn't call them exactly beautiful. They are astonishingly well preserved considering their age, but not so well as to make one long for intimate contact with them. In fact, I must confess they are the greatest monstrosity I ever encountered in an art-institute; and that is saying a good deal. If the art-institute in Cairo is to be a museum and not merely an enormous warehouse, they really must refrain, in the interest of the visitors, from displaying corpses cheek by jowl with works of art. However, one can't waste time over such trifles here.

We have seen the people of the pyramids: Chefren, Mykerinos, Ti the master-builder, and many more whose statues they have brought here from the temples and burial-places. One's amazement

at the fact is not dispelled by the positive conviction, astounding as it is, that one can get to know the faces of people who lived fifty centuries ago. One never noticed it at Sakkara. True enough, the reliefs told us of the things they played with in their everyday lives, and of the poetry with which they invested them. There was nothing wanting. This, in fact, was just the sort of information the reliefs were capable of conveying; this was what gave them their charm and added the perfect touch to the surrounding atmosphere. One would never have expected the builders of the pyramids to do anything childish. The same is true of the round sculpture standing about in the rooms. One would never have expected the carvers of the reliefs to produce those statues. The great profiles of Sakkara, a couple of which—and those among the finest—are preserved in the collection in Cairo, are arabesques in the most exalted style: wonderful linear melodies; but simply linear, and inevitably so, since nothing more substantial can be represented by those means. A stronger emphasis on portraiture would have upset their relationship with the rest of the graphic decorations.

The standing figures turned the villas of the dead into something more than a décor, plain and simple; they made them inhabited. The formal completion of the one genre by means of the other is indispensable, for the relief supports the sculptured stress and furnishes the statue with a linear frame. The painted decoration constituted a very positive bond between them; and often it can only be understood as a means to domestic harmony. The destruction of this unity is lamentable. The house of Ti without its statue, without the incarnate cautious amiability of its master, is a mere fragment. The feminine decoration of the walls lacks the manly seriousness of the sculpture; and one can imagine how much more fragmentary in effect are the pieces of mural decoration that they cut out and carry off to Europe or America. The statue, on the other hand, is not bound up with the setting for which it was contrived. It is an absolute work of art and bears placing in a museum,

even in this Cairo store. You cannot efface it. It would create his own atmosphere in any room.

These are the people of the pyramids. The accent lies on the second word. Our imagination requires no stage in order to produce them; and no questions are asked. Above all, they are people, realized in a complete plastic shape. At the pyramids our fancy may play tricks with us; the Sphinx, that creature of rock and pyramid, which belongs nowhere but in the desert, may trifle with our romantic fancies; but these statues have arms and legs and cannot deceive us. The syntax of their anatomy is too familiar to us for that; and as connoisseurs we have long since acquired an agility which leaps every geographical boundary and gathers the sculpture of China and Crete and Cologne and New Guinea into one room, onto one table. So long as the stone is alive, we snap our fingers at everything else.

The curious thing about these statues is the readiness with which they lend themselves to every experiment. As though they knew how we look at things they stand before us stripped, not merely of clothes, but also of every stylistic elaboration which we should have to remove before we reached their human significance. They have forestalled us by giving up all decoration. They impress us with all the force of naked fact—so naked, indeed, that the merest nothing is needed to invest them with all the glamor of the pyramid-dwellers. This impressiveness is something profounder than their physical reality and carries us beyond the sensory world. It attains to a degree of conviction which in Europe one meets with only in painting. I now know that none of our thoughts about the might of the Sphinx and the Pyramids was exaggerated.

The first thing that strikes us is their lifelikeness. The diorite Chefren on his lion-headed throne is supremely lifelike. One believes that one could substitute the living original for the stone. Even at the first glance our immediate reactions meet with no check; and more than this, as we gaze our eyes travel unconsciously

and rhythmically over the surface of body and limbs, discovering new details with every change of standpoint. Thus the actual lifelikeness becomes symbolic. Naturally there are no warts on the face or scars on the legs. We do not notice it, however, for our first reaction, as though to a living original, has given place to a sense of the stone; and black and yellow spotted diorite knows nothing of warts and scars.

The material provided for the pyramid-builders was stone. The Sphinx is conceivable only in stone. Stone lay ready to the Egyptian's hand; and he handled it, as in other ages men have handled brush and canvas. They made enchanting things in wood and metal, but stone carried them beyond mere enchantment. No other material spurred them to the highest flights of abstraction. Their wood and metal sculpture is purely ornamental. Even works like the Village Magistrate and the great bronze statues of King Phiops and his little son are of that order. The comfortable wooden Village Magistrate possesses a realism which at first sight surpasses the reality of the stone sculptures; but the impression doesn't last. His lifelikeness does not depend on warts and scars either, but on the niceties of form. You can imagine him reduced, but not enlarged; whereas Chefren would suit any scale. The lifesize statues of Phiops in bronze or copper are also unique in their bewildering reality; but they speak more of race than of individual. Their Semitic look is the most striking thing about them. I couldn't help thinking of the Leipzig lady and her anti-Semitism. Phiops, father and son, are extraordinarily Jewish looking. Their beauty has doubtless been helped by the patina of time: an aid of which the precision of the noblest Egyptian works makes them independent.

Which stands higher: the precision of the diorite statue, or its freedom? Type and individual seem one. As king, Chefren was a god; and the sculptor regarded him as divine and knew what he stood for. He made the divinity of the man so impressive that we recognize him out of thousands; and that too, when we have such

difficulty in telling one native from another. To this day I only recognize our Ibrahim by his missing eye.

This business of resemblance is a difficult problem. In the hall of Chefren is the alabaster statue of King Mykerinos, also seated and gazing in front of him, also naked but for his similar apron and royal headdress. The position of the body is precisely the same. Mykerinos belonged to the same dynasty and was the immediate successor of Chefren: a near relative, probably his son. He probably had some family likeness to his predecessor, we may infer. In a small alabaster statue in the Museum, which passes as Chefren, this resemblance goes so far that we might give this statute to Mykerinos. Nevertheless, the diorite statue is one man and the alabaster quite another: two utterly different characters and temperaments, each with its own disposition and way of thinking. Chefren is obviously sensitive and intelligent, thoroughly noble and kingly; the other, sturdy and superficial, passive rather than active. The differences may have been otherwise; but in no sense were they men of the same stamp. Though they were gods they represent two generations with all the notorious distinctions between them.

The whole range of Egyptian art lies before us; but we need not relate how it advanced from the royal statues of the fourth dynasty to the diorite statue of Chefren or the alabaster statue of Mykerinos, for this question touches us comparatively little. We can visualize this development a good deal more easily than the creation of masterpieces much nearer to us in date. Judged by our standards, the artist's personal share in the conception was remarkably restricted. So much the more vigorous, then, was their tradition; and we inevitably begin to talk of formulas. In this we are amply justified by the Pyramids, which are nothing if not a formula. On the other hand, the formula for the human body, as designed in the earlier periods, is much harder to define. Above all, just as we think we can grasp it, the formula melts into the natural organism;

and this corresponds so obligingly to our conceptions that in similar circumstances we should be ready—indeed, only too willing—to accept a like convention for the human body. But the circumstances are unrealizable, of course; though neither our feelings nor our knowledge preclude them. We have to fall back on stupid superficial obstacles like the lack of stone and kings rather than admit that we cannot adapt ourselves to the old tradition. This theoretical readiness grows when we turn from the statues of kings to the numberless figures and groups from the Old Kingdom which belong to a humbler social level and are made of less refractory material. Then one feels inclined to dismiss all fundamental obstacles and concentrate on the question of models.

This troublesome question of models ought certainly not to be underrated. We are the more inclined to attach supreme importance to it inasmuch as this concession to our pride appears at first sight to involve comparatively small sacrifices, for it would clearly be unfair to blame our art for the lack of suitable subject-matter.

That they had excellent models we can easily convince ourselves even now at any street-corner. Though the Fellahs no longer go naked, their voluminous robes are loose enough to show every form. They stand like columns, all built from the same good pattern and not degraded by the accidents of hackwork. The city has not warped them. Everywhere you see natives in white caftan and thickly twisted turban. Above all, the servants are the aristocrats and the gentry are the proletariat, a state of things which also obtains in Europe. Only in England do gentlemen almost equal waiters in looks and ladies occasionally surpass their housemaids: a dazzling tribute to a civilization uncorroded by the intellect. Elsewhere it's the same story over and over again. Only in Egypt, however, have I noticed this optic effect in so marked a degree. Here there are no exceptions. Dr. Meyerhof maintains that you would never get into touch with the native even if you consorted

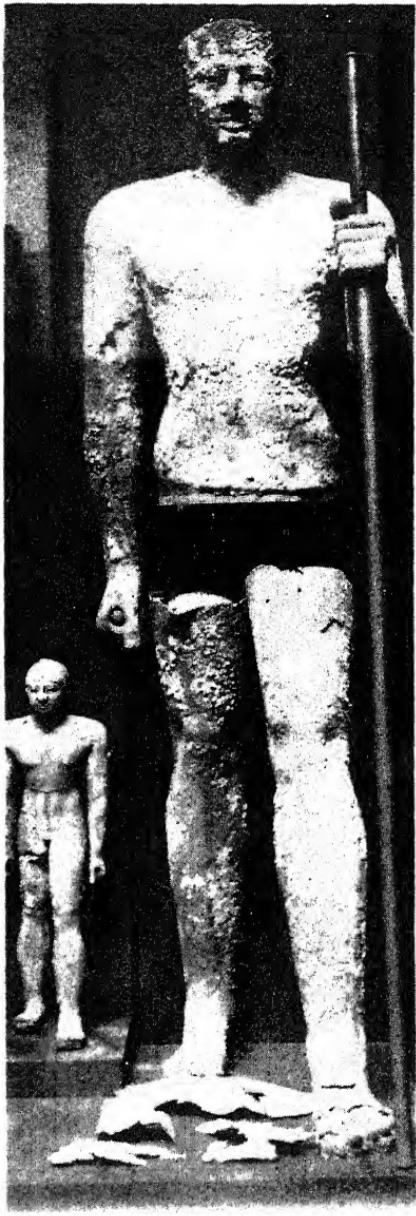
with him daily for twenty years. Our external appearance would account for that. What must they think of Mr. Coolman or the Behn family or the Parisian goat! To them we are grotesque creatures with money, and the only thing that induces them to speak to us is the hope of fleecing us.

Yet until our ugliness, a thing of yesterday, made its appearance, there were no natives anywhere who did not know how to carry themselves. Models do not produce artists. Countless races share the same heaven and are still on a level with the Eskimos as far as astronomy is concerned. You cannot put it down to geography. However, our studio notions don't take us very far. Of course they knew nothing of Art or Artists, and the Pyramids are not Cubism; on the other hand they were uncommonly interested in the material representation of human beings. This much we do know; and we can sleep secure in that knowledge, for it conceals the reason why they reached not only a certain height but actually this summit—a summit as much for us as for them. Without undue rashness we might add that it implies a culture and that that culture implies a social hierarchy. And of this social hierarchy we know only that it exempted the models from the necessity of serving as waiters and asking Mr. Coolman for a tip.

Babuschka has a heap of thick history-books with her, all the best that can be got. As a result of her enquiries all sorts of strange acrostics have been solved. If the distance amounts to a thousand miles one may assume that we have already covered a tenth of a millimeter; it is only right and proper that the learned should keep one toe on the earth. A tenth of a millimeter is enormous. The three idiots who were breakfasting with Herr von K., and whom I now see every day bustling about with terrifying self-importance in the storehouse, are not the only people at work; though they may contribute their mite to the tenth of the millimeter. For the layman it is little enough. I do not understand how the sculptor, who believed that the king was a god, succeeded in representing him so

that he now can thaw into a human being. One would like to know that above all things. This actuality does not seem to us compatible with collective creation. I mean, of course, this degree of actuality. Even a child can produce some sort of actuality. The reliefs at Sakkara are full of it. Here, however, we are up against a superiority which we are in the habit of attributing to none but great personalities, to the destroyers of the collective spirit: a spiritual superiority which, in our experience, is only achieved after a desperate struggle with the collective spirit.

The supposition that such spirituality is a leading force in early periods of a culture and its attendant art is contradicted by everything that we know of the development of art. The development has reached a head; where are the remains of the primitive? In Egypt there are no inarticulate moans and benighted stammerings; the sculptors of the Old Kingdom knew everything that we know today. Their grasp of anatomy was not, as among the artists of the Quattrocento and Cinquecento, a discovery of their own to be gloated over, but an inheritance from former ages to which they had been accustomed from childhood. They could play about with any part of the body and let it go; they knew the secrets of simplification like ripe masters and let the childish self-made men of Sakkara go about their own business. The maker of the diorite statue was an artist in the fullest sense of the word, as we understand it: a creator with an unrestricted mastery of his idea, authoritative and subtle, since subtlety was his province. Creation was spontaneous, and complete. All the supports of the skeleton are at rest. An arm will show its joints and the swell of its muscles without being at all naturalistic. On the pedestal the soft flesh plays over the shin-bone, but the movement is confined by the structure of the surface. The hand could open, the head could turn, but you expect it as little as you expect a capital to turn on its column. The ear and all parts of the face are brilliantly modeled, but fit together in the mathematical form. The flesh on the body is soft and firm, both at once, and



Village Magistrate. V Dynasty. Bronze Statue of King Phiops and His Son.



Alabaster Statue of Mykerinos.

muscular without showing the muscles; it softens the stern arrangement of the surfaces.

One is never tempted to forget the stone; indeed, one cannot forget it. They left it in places where otherwise there would have been holes; these discreet fillings have a logic which today we can recognize only by dint of severe self-denial. They understood stone as they understood the body, and their style seems only a natural result of their proper handling of the material. The spotted black and yellow diorite and alabaster were made for this kind of sculpture; no other substance is imaginable. None the less, these statues, whose present condition seems flawlessly complete, were once painted. So the learned say; to me at least the idea is repellent. Not only the noble material, but the animated play of light over the surface, which to us—and surely to their creator also—forms so great a part of their effect, must then have been concealed, or at all events greatly reduced, by paint. One has the greatest difficulty in believing it. Or did they reckon with the impermanence of paint?

The statues stood in the houses of the dead, to keep the gods of the dead from making mistakes. For that reason a likeness was essential. When the features were obliterated by decay, which they tried to ward off by every means in their power, the plastic counterfeit served to identify the withered forms: a favorable stimulus, obviously of the greatest advantage to art. The achieving of a likeness henceforth introduced a note of actuality; whereas in other cultures this actuality only attained a restricted scope with the weakening of the religious impulse, and then merely through a specific realism which was often isolated in portraiture, and to which other more comprehensive tendencies were sacrificed. Among the Egyptians the effort remained a means to an end, and led not to the egotistic portrait but to a permanent exercise of the creative faculties to which all the aspects of art had access. The result was an

unusually auspicious equipoise of the representational requirements of art and the exactions of nature.

The diorite statue of Chefren is as realistic as it is monumental. This announcement will excite nobody, as we have all just been told the same thing about Mr. Jones's war memorial at Smithville. The value of the comparison lies in the specific gravity of both factors. If I could indicate the monumentality of the Chefren by a comparison, or any other method, it might be possible for me to give some conception, likewise, of its realism. I have tried in vain. It is not that we lack monumental works with a realism of their own; it is superfluous, however, to put the reader to the trouble of journeying from these works to the Chefren. The fact that our works are sometimes made of stone and sometimes also represent kings is a bond in common; but we cannot derive much solid satisfaction from it and are likely to lose ourselves in a maze of words.

In the magazine at Cairo there stands by the staircase leading to the first floor a monumental lion of the Ptolemaic period which came as a relief to us, almost like a familiar friend in his stiff heraldic fashion. He sits on his hindquarters, and his mane, cut straight in front, consists of even curls, while his neck is covered with similar wavy ornamentation. The whole creature is a highly effective ornament. From this Egyptian lion my mind can travel to the Romanesque lions at the portals of a Lombard cathedral, or even to the lions of ancient China. For relevant comparisons with such monuments one has to look among the primitives. Once in possession of this link, I can overlook it the better to appreciate its reality; and so long as even a small connection remains, I can pass over.

Every attempt of this sort goes to pieces upon the diorite statue. Its style transcends the known genres and touches at its height the indefinite regions of the classic, a fluent comparison which has long seemed commonplace.

A single almost heraldic detail helps the head of Chefren. Under

his chin the king wears the stereotyped beard-support, which we can easily think away and which many royal statues lack, and over his forehead the schematic headdress which relates him to the Sphinx, an ingenious and becoming arrangement enveloping the royal wig and replacing the crown. This was a great opportunity for the sculptor. The Egyptians knew what was appropriate to a royal head. Our crowns, except when confined to a simple fillet, have the severe disadvantage of isolating the head and making it look insecure. The Egyptians invented, for their greater ceremonies, the two high, cap-like crowns, red and white, for the northern and the southern kingdoms; one was broad and of moderate height, while the other was extremely tall and rose to a point, a magnificent tiara topped with a round knob, adding dignity to the body and ideally completing its structure. Often they wore spreading, curved and ribbed appendages on either side which contribute to the relief-effect; these, perhaps, are a relic of the lion wig. The exaggerated height has an irresistible *chic*. The Catholic clergy made use of these forms; the crozier and the great mantle enveloping the body were invented on the banks of the Nile. The beard-support, which in later days was often longer, turned into the priest's pectoral. The superb tiara was converted in course of time into the papal crown; and there was never an Italian peasant's face that did not acquire awe-inspiring dignity from such an adornment.

Chefren needed no such finery; it might perhaps even hinder our approach to him. The simple attire of the head has this inestimable advantage for the sculptor, that it announces the union of the head with the torso and covers up the abrupt angle between neck and shoulders. The cloth lies smooth and tight over the forehead and falls from the crown of the head behind the ears in two parallel folds over the shoulders, which, however, it leaves free; it then runs over the breast in two short ribbed ends of equal breadth, so that the head is framed as by a mane, though easily and familiarly withal. The back of the head is encircled by Horus

the falcon, with his pinions, the symbol of the god. It is, I believe, the only representation of the kind in a statue; so that we may see in it no automatic empty badge of royalty but a personal mark belonging to Chefren himself. In any case we need no mythology, no Horus legend, in order to understand it. The open wings are a convincing symbol and the artistic solution does everything to carry that conviction far beyond the commonplaces of heraldry. The bird perches with its claws in the middle of the support behind the king's head. The head, with its curved beak, rises a little above the king and the almost equal wings embrace the whole headdress and reach forward almost to the place where the ribbed ends begin. The effect of the ornament seems like the happiest accident in the world. Any artist of today who wishes to celebrate a king might well borrow the idea. Any great man, intent on spiritual things, might thus be glorified. When Rodin set a demon in human shape blowing into Victor Hugo's ear he realized in a moment of rare insight, though expressing it in unfamiliar terms, that demon and poet are indeed one. The limiting of this falcon idea to an ornamental device, which cannot—and is not intended to—be fully visible from in front, is a tactical masterstroke which is, I think, characteristic of the whole imagination of the Old Kingdom. It is not the king, but the divine beast, who is heraldic. The falcon rapidly and almost imperceptibly becomes the regular device on the soldier's helmet. The unusual type is rendered inconspicuous by the way it is arranged. Unless they saw Chefren in profile it is likely that his subjects never observed the divine symbol, which, as a fact, was not necessary to arouse their respect and awe. The man rose above his mark of rank and thrust it back.

Perhaps no ordinary mortals ever set foot in this temple. The crowd thronged outside in front of the sun-god with the lion's body and the features of Chefren, and sacrificed to the illustrious watcher. But here within the temple the king threw off the mask and be-

came a man in all his naked dignity. The form is worthy of the idea. The cult of the beast had already lost its terrors.

The diorite statue stood with others of its kind in the granite hall of the temple of Chefren at Gizeh, below the Sphinx. The effect of the man enthroned amid the rigid masonry, the play of color from the green-flecked stone to the red granite must have been incomparable. It is harder than ever to believe that this was painted.

Babuschka and I disputed for ages over Chefren's type. To her, the beauty of the statue lies in its disdain of all heroic pomp, negative though this attribute may be. She maintains, moreover, that the man must certainly have played a part in Egyptian literature, and she would like to corroborate the dignity of Chefren by giving him personal preferences such as we are glad to ascribe to the monarchs of our own day.

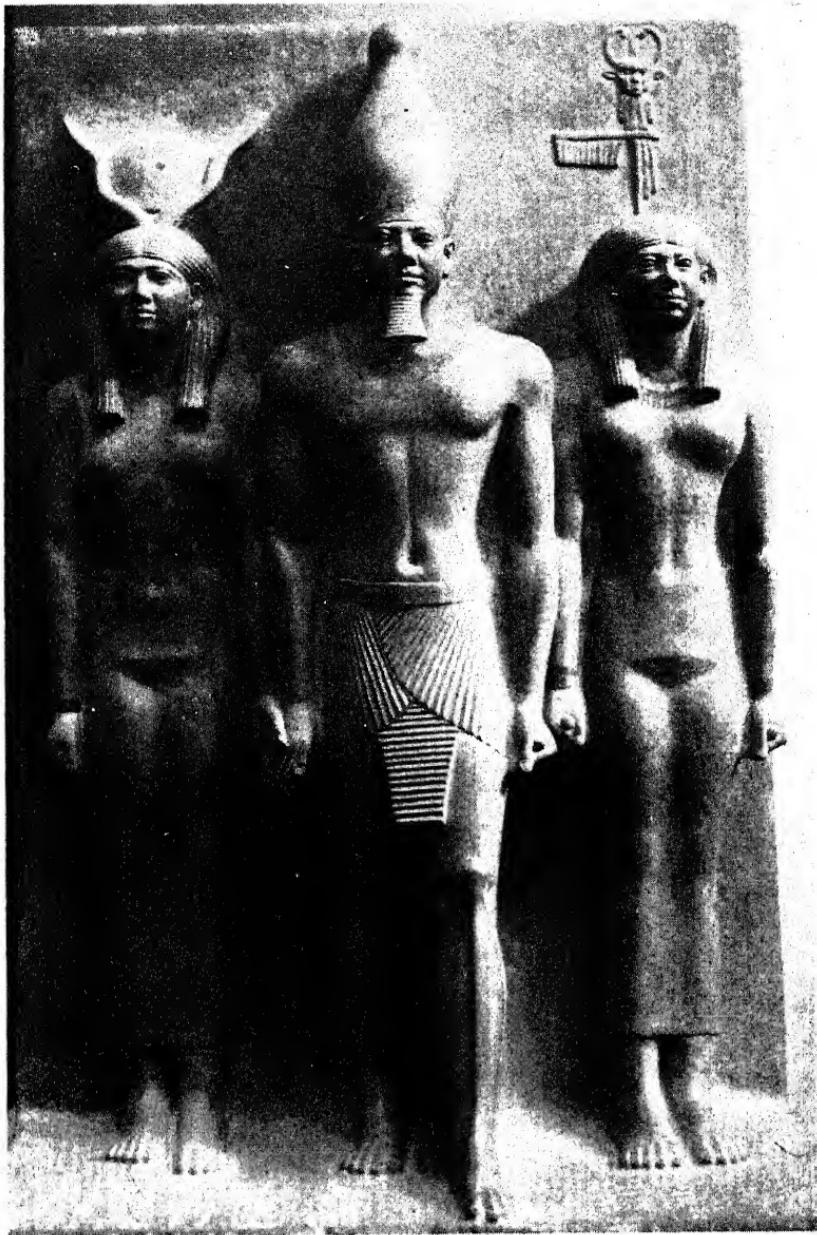
In the afternoon, as we were wandering idly over the yellow sand of Gizeh, we realized that a Pharaoh who had himself worshipped as a sphinx and buried in a pyramid hardly corresponded with our notions of simplicity; and that what we stigmatize as the exaggerated pomp of our potentates is actually an excessively modest allowance of splendor.

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## THE FAMILY IN THE CAIRO MUSEUM

AMONG the many—the far too many—masterpieces in the first hall of the Museum, where the diorite statue of Chefren stands, there is a limestone group under glass. It is our piece; we call it the Family. There are many other attractions, of course, in this hall—notably the diorite statue—and if the room contained nothing else, it would be enough. But the scale of this work, though quite approachable, makes us unable to feel for it what we feel for the family. The Chefren statue breathes the air of the temple: not necessarily of that gateway of red granite blocks where it stood with its replicas in front of the columns to such good effect; but the air of temples generally. It is a monument. Our family, on the other hand, we can, so to speak, carry about with us. The glass case is barely a meter high; and although the group, like all others, was destined for the purposes of the cult, it has a feeling about it that one may without exaggeration call intimate. There are such works. Sooner or later, for the most part, one's frivolous relations with them break down; works which surrender their secret at once and yet retain their power to please are extremely rare.

The family belongs, moreover, to the small number of minor pieces in this room which it is possible to see properly. The glass case stands free. The group consists of four people side by side, man, woman, and two sons. The man is seated; his wife and chil-



King Mykerinos with two Goddesses.



Our Family. Ni-Ra-Anch. (Limestone)

dren stand. Such groups are common in early times. Often too, especially when there are no children by, the wife sits beside her husband and is the same size as he. The man, as usual, is naked down to the inevitable apron, and his skin bears traces of red-brown paint, whereas the gray of the other comes nearer the natural color of the limestone. In any case the other also was originally painted. We recognize the remains of color on the breast and hips of the woman; and this time the pure idea and the material trappings do not conflict. They have replaced the man's head, which had come off but was fortunately undamaged. The wife and one of the sons have lost their heads. The wife, on the right of the seated figure, and both the sons are considerably smaller. She wears the usual close-fitting garment which leaves the feet free, and holds her right arm straight in front of her. With outstretched hand she touches her husband's arm. Her other arm disappears behind his shoulder and embraces him. The two sons stand on either side, to left and right. All four figures of course look straight in front of them. The woman and the son near her stand in the same plane as the upper part of the man, while the other son stands level with his father's legs. The only connection lies in the woman's gesture, and even this does not affect the frontal position of her body. Moreover, the woman's right hand does not grasp her husband's arm, but merely touches it with the tips of her unbent and strictly parallel fingers: a conventional gesture which is often found. The man's attitude is not in the least affected by her touching him. He sits solidly there, well aware that he is sitting for his portrait; his features are fixed and set. The attitude is important, but other things are more so. A repressed smile plays on his young face. There is something beautiful about the man's physical self-command. Under its patterned wig his head is balanced on his broad shoulders; again, the wig, which comes down over his cheeks, makes an effective setting. His figure tapers gently; one feels the well-knit athletic body. No fat, no super-

fluous muscle, good breeding, health and youthful freshness. We saw more surprising lines in the great profiles at Sakkara, and in the reliefs at the museum we have found one or two sublime contours: for instance, in the dark wooden panel of the third dynasty with the priest Hesire—a profile with something of the *élan* of a Mohican. All that Egyptian relief can offer us is possessed by this family group, which means an irresistible fascination. Nevertheless sculpture in the round is richer in content; it is less easy to take in these solid effects. A whole world of new tones rise up; and its beauty lies in the coöperation of forces held in restraint. Face, limbs, parts mean less and the whole means more. This beauty is more lasting; it is more spontaneous and natural, and less a lucky glimpse than a normal and static condition. The boys also have a charm which it is hard to define; the *putti* of the Quattrocento are prettier, but hardly attain to this solid reality. Their quaintness has none of the sweet and comic qualities that help a foreigner to success. They are men on a small scale and stand there like grown-ups left foot advanced, right hand on breast and the other stretched at their side, weighty and solemn. They know their places and play no pranks and are merely a small portion of the whole. You might call them their parents' supporters. Like cadences they bring the group to a close on either side. It is remarkable how well the four figures work together, though they are on two distinct planes. The difference of plane gives a feeling of space in spite of the flat relief-like treatment.

Although the woman has no head she fulfills quite adequately the rôle of partner. Her body would have been admired in Paris until boyish fashions came in and the breasts disappeared, as *fausse maigre*: very thin with round and not too full breasts and long thighs like an odalisque's, sweeping to the knee in an uninterrupted gentle curve, as Ingres would have had it. The dress consists of two parts: the tight skirt which finishes off short below the breasts and a thin piece of stuff covering the breast, cut off abruptly below and

fastened on the shoulder with brooches. It is the most becoming dress imaginable for the matchless body.

One never tires of their beauty. Their charm is not confined to their natural inheritance of unmistakable breeding, nor to their perfect bodily condition. It is not these peculiarities, striking as they are, that captivate us. It is the family, the company of four people, not their merely formal harmony. At the first glance we felt it, if only as a premonition. We did not fail, of course, to notice the unusual diminution of the wife's proportions, but no one interpreted that as a slight upon her, not only because there were plenty of groups all round without this difference, which would have dispelled our suspicion that this might be a cryptic allusion, but also because just this diminution of scale enhanced the attraction of this woman and the whole group, and even the irresistible charm of the attitude it implied. The diminution of scale increased the specifically feminine effect and emphasized the tender womanly gesture. Even if this gesture, the only one in the whole group, was made by agreement, none the less we detect in it a peculiar gentleness and in the smile with which the man responds we cannot mistake his appreciation of her devotion. If it is purely conventional we infer that not only the people of this group but all the rest of their circle were equally devoted to each other. The position of the children as supporters to the parents gives us a very fair insight into the relation between the two generations. Here we have a family.

It occurs to me that in Europe no such sculptured family group exists. Sculpture did not exist for that purpose; and if occasionally it served such ends it usually beat a hasty retreat. In our palmy days groups were made solely for churches: scenes from the Passion, a Pietà, the Women at the Cross. Families were confined to painting. Such orders inspired the artist to representations which are often enough masterpieces. Painting very seldom got beyond an indication of the sitter's social status, though of course it suggested that he was human. (Who could deny that to van Eyck or Rem-

brandt or Greco!) But in the nature of things his humanity got entangled in his clothes. Painting thus seized the excuse of lightening its labors by investigating the attributes of knights, potentates, and burghers. Only an abnormally intense personality succeeded in completely objectifying his clothes and protecting the art which had escaped from the clutches of the priests and turning it into a class-production. For which reason it retired into private life, and never attained to the independent universal humanity of our family of the fifth dynasty. It is doubtful how this universalization could come about in a society which we are accustomed to regard as the class-state *par excellence* and recur not as an accident in defiance of established order, but a hundredfold, a thousandfold, till it really corresponded to a mass-instinct.

I am amazed at the quality of these mass-products and their intimate expressiveness; I wonder how conventionality could be content with arrangement and gesture and give the sculptor free access to every bodily fact. When the clothes fall aside the man's body seems to be released from a case for which we always have to make allowances when representing the naked body. I do not know whether the usual explanation of this phenomenon, which connects it with their custom of going naked, is the right one; still less do I know whether, in fact, they did go about naked. With us the body becomes something abstract as soon as the clothes are removed: a situation from which only the baroque has found an escape. Nothing is less baroque than Egyptian art; no vaporous play or convolution issues from it. Nothing is less stiff, either, or less stylized. In front of our family nobody thinks of the object of sculpture. The studio-product called a model, which in Europe results from the disappearance of the sculptor behind his object, a soulless stone with, at most, an interesting head: this substratum, which only our most renowned masters lose sight of on the rare occasions when they see the nude without dramatizing its activity, does not exist in Egypt. Once upon a time when captivated by

the baroque I failed to see clearly, or perhaps overlooked, this substratum in Michelangelo. Now I see it so clearly that it seems to me the fundamental difference between Egypt and ourselves; and I track the model like the scent of an animal, the residue of an exercise in virtuosity which in spite of every expenditure of effort was in the last instance useless since it clung obstinately to the surface.

The problem of our sculpture, even at its highest moments, thus presents itself; and I tremble when I summon up our most famous achievements in this hall of Chefren. It is no good hiding our head in the sand and pretending that it's no business of ours; it is no good reminding ourselves that Egypt was something different. No: it is not different, cannot be different; or we should cease to be anything ourselves. It is only because Egyptian art has qualities which excite our senses and lead us to make readjustments which have long been needed but which would never have come to fruition without a stimulus from outside, that it has any value for us; and if we decline to follow where the finger points, we are no sun-worshippers. These Egyptians mean nothing to Egypt and the remote past, but for our present world they are of supreme importance. I am not talking of education, which is not my affair, but I am announcing the fact of a spiritual experience. The famous conventions of this art, so far as they remain impenetrable, have nothing to do with the case, and become a refuge for those who flee from the responsibility of thinking. For all the severity of their conventions the Egyptians of the earlier dynasties expressed themselves in sculpture as naturally as men of genius in our own day have done with brush or point. This is one fact, and the most surprising: the naturalness of their conventional art. And the results of this manipulative skill are not sketches and fragments but complete realities. The latent aspects, however, which connect them with our own works and without which we should be unmoved, the motive power within the work which sustains us, the element

which we have to supply upon reaching the common limit of the senses—in a word, their associations: these too they possess and cherish. Their associations—one must complete the idea behind the awkward expression—come across to us without any baroque assistance, without the slightest help from any stimulants, but in complete tranquillity at a distance of goodness knows how many centuries.

Our family is partly naked; but the rhythm of their forms clothes them for us. Their forms are those which we can use in order to clothe people with our affection for them. I love the odd dignity of the two young men, the noble figure of their father and the unadorned comeliness of his face, with the brow behind which there is no room for any mean thoughts. I love the rounded but slender limbs of the woman, whose love was smiling and supple. But better than all is their mutual tenderness and pleasure in each other's company. A convention again; but one that sees nothing but beauty and wonder without hindrance. I associate it with what appears to be an anachronistic conception. It belongs to the city; or rather, since the foreign word is more comprehensive, I would call it urbane. And the implications of that carry us further and further into the distance, I fancy.

Naturally enough, this and every convention are fundamentally alien to our mannerless age; still we can feel their echo, and even by a sort of romantic connoisseurship can identify ourselves with them. The further away it is in actual fact the more firmly we grasp the principle and draw near in our dreams to this ideal family relationship. Thus would we be, with and without a family, had we the opportunity of living another life. It is impossible, I know. Our native meanness, our animal-worship and a thousand petty trifles hinder us—not one only: the geographical obstacle. It is not enough to have been born five thousand years ago and to have a dark skin. It is a question of conventions. There are no such

conventions; but there well might be. They are conceivable; they are not African alone, but perfectly good European as well.

Again, as always in this hall, we have a feeling that we cannot express, but which also crossed our minds at the Pyramids and in front of the reliefs at Sakkara. Everything in ancient Egypt, in fact, speaks to us in the same way. This beauty is part of us, belongs to us, and to my mind is the possession of our dreams. There we belong to this family.

Without our willing it our minds run on when we stand before this group. It has long ceased to be art and has become human. We have embarked on a conversation without words, an intimacy of a serious sort—not the sort that leads to a comfortable, happy-go-lucky relationship. Our intercourse, though easy, is more finely wrought. There is no idle toying, but a determination to improve our form and realize our dream.

Such a relationship, of course, becomes feasible only in the realm of literature and art, in the cheerful presence of enlightened people who can appreciate such a dream and disengage it from the tangle of existence. We can hardly expect such things at present, seeing that we regard such a search as comic and almost indecent and seeing that we hardly dare hope to recover any general belief in the value of the urbane from the obstinate loneliness of our personal existence. Part of its value came from the time and place and the congregation of many kindred spirits. So it happened that I remembered the most urbane community that Europe has ever produced: Paris. Oh no, not the Parisian Messieurs. They have none of the frank gaze of the uncontaminated youth of the fifth dynasty. Nor indeed Parisian women; though, if I remember rightly, they could bear comparison with that slender little creature. No: it was nothing personal; personal contacts in Paris mostly result in bitterness and disillusion and disgust. Why then do we love the place and live there for years and feel at home there? Not on account of the Louvre, outside or in, not on account of any building, or because

the gardens, squares and streets are more attractive there than elsewhere, or the pictures more numerous. Anything you could photograph would be merely incidental. It is rather because it is easier to live in these gardens, squares and streets, and among the people in these gardens, squares and streets: because one's contacts here cause less friction and yet are closer, because one feels something like the atmosphere that envelops our Family. It is convention again; not that of the second Empire or the first, not that of Louis Seize or Louis Quinze in particular, but a little of all at once. It glitters like a mote in the sunbeam, is everywhere and nowhere, and in men—to my mind—it shows itself only in their most superficial actions. It shows itself in the accidental appearance, only yesterday, of a painter like Corot, that most actual and agreeable of beings. His private instincts at times bring him very near our family.

Corot and ancient Egypt! People will think I am going crazy. Of course I am not being serious: no, indeed. I can't explain, and would gladly admit the possibility of its all being written out in hieroglyphs on the foot of our statue, which prevents its helping us much. I don't understand hieroglyphs and regret it, but if the possession of such knowledge prevented my desire to explain the mystery I would rather be without it. For the mystery is what captivates us; and it applies as much to our group as to Corot's pictures. What we call his Greek aspect, and might with more reason call his Egyptian aspect, is his power of communicating with kindred spirits and bringing them together: his spontaneous persuasiveness. Without it Corot would be a landscape-painter, a portraitist, a man in the wood, but not Corot. And when he was painting his women he was as unaware of it as the sculptor of our family was incapable of anticipating our remote age.

One cannot say more, still less write more without running the risk of becoming too compact and spoiling the atmosphere of

urbanity. Criticism can therefore dispense with the religious background of this art. The repose of such sublimities is unassailable.

As we were inspecting the woman again today, Babuschka said: "Tell me, am I fatter than she is?"

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## ANOTHER FAMILY

WE have perused the literature concerning our family-group and learnt nothing. Our group stood in a tomb too, and was made to provide company for the departed spirit (of our friend, naturally) and to introduce him to the gods of the dead. His name, the hieroglyphs inform us, was Ni-Ra-Anch. When he died, the man was of course much older, and his wife was presumably no longer so slim, and the two boys had grown into men. Very likely he was already older when he sat to the sculptor; although that cannot be taken for granted, for all Egyptians thought like their kings, and with an eye to their future state made leisurely preparation for their eternal dwelling. They wished to be represented in the prime of life, though for ritual reasons the likeness had to be absolutely exact; hence idealization on a basis of reality. Our group is distinguished from all other families by its physiognomic, not by its plastic qualities. Only gradually do we become aware of its artistic distinction; the individuality of the subjects, however, we recognize instantaneously.

In the entrance to the second hall, where the bronze statue is, there stands—rather too high, unfortunately—a limestone group of a standing pair, man and wife, of equal size before a stone wall covered with hieroglyphs: an elderly pair. The woman has the usual tight garment and holds out her right arm in the inevitable

horizontal posture—the only horizontal line in the body. Her outstretched hand comes level with the man's hip, where his apron begins, and touches his hanging arm. Both are compact and scarcely aristocratic in build: she a comfortable matronly figure, and he perhaps a little younger. He wears the peaked wig which comes down low over his forehead and fits close to his cheeks. This head-covering has little in common with our notion of a wig, being in fact more like the close ribbed helmet of our knights. The woman's hair, severely stylized with a well-defined parting, reaches to her breast. The style of hairdressing that frames their round faces increases their martial appearance. Their expression is striking: a collected, worthy, serious air, that one might call bourgeois in the strictest sense of the word—bourgeois without being humdrum or hard or narrow, bourgeois in the sense of being a conscientious and responsible citizen. The upright standing figures inspire us with unlimited confidence; one can imagine such a pair as pillars of the constitution.

This is quite a different family from our tenderly united group; there is nothing tender about these people. They belong to a second category, nearer the average and the center of things; whereas our family moves on the outskirts of society, along with the artists and the poets. Our name for this second pair is The Elders.

I don't know what view they took of marriage. It is alleged that they were not very strict. I am not familiar with the law of ancient Egypt, and few details are accessible. The highly objective sculpture of those days strikes me as a completely comprehensive document for the Egyptian ménage. Whether legally or no, monogamy must have played a decisive part; and if the statutes enacted that a woman was man's chattel, custom made this subservience a harmless affair. This stone pair is monumental propaganda on behalf of monogamy. I have searched in vain for a like confirmation in European art of our more explicit ordinances. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there are of course plenty of double portraits

which display, among other social practices, an exemplary relation between married couples; but our examples are less avowedly concerned with the closeness of the marriage-tie. The stiff-necked northern bourgeoisie admits of no doubt about an order of things in which man has the absolute mastery. For our part we can scarcely conceive how married people can have lived together on such terms. Doubtless it was easy enough, however; convention forbade too searching an inquiry. We are respectable citizens; that will do! In our northern countries marriage was a consequence of citizenship; in Egypt, on the contrary, one is inclined to believe that citizenship was simply a wider extension of the married state.

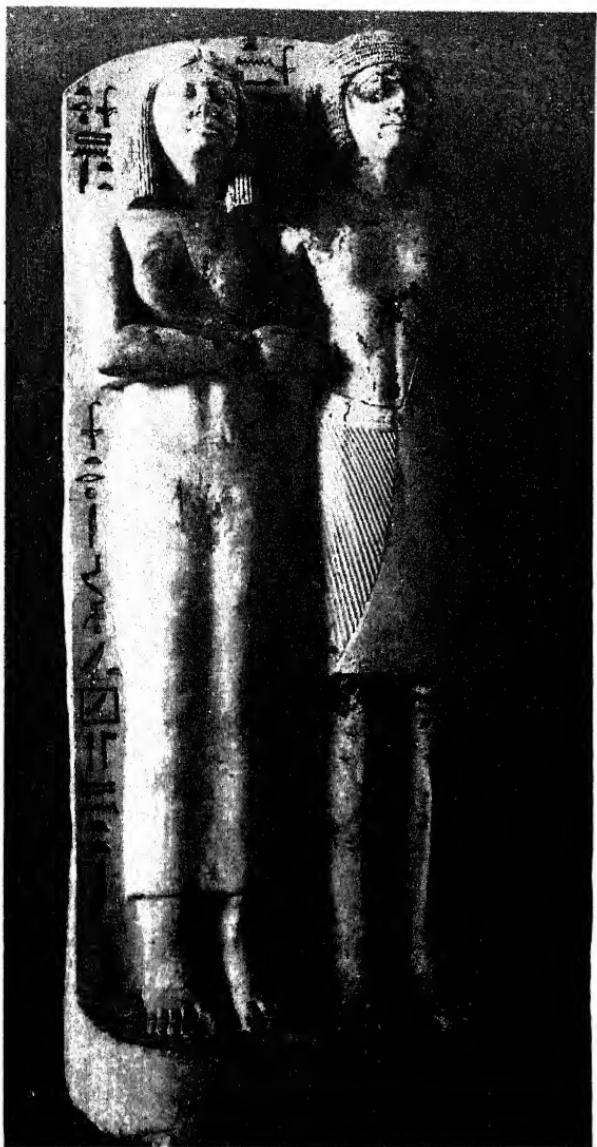
A student, with whom we returned from Gizeh (where there is a sort of university), told us some remarkable facts about the status of women in Egypt today. Man has practically all the rights here. The student was a nice fellow who had learnt good French from the Jesuits. Naturally he regarded the English as sworn enemies; that is the regular rule. You find very few Anglophiles among the young people, unless they happen to have a father or an uncle in the government service.

"Before we turn the English out, mind you," the student continued, "we must set our own house in order and stop our own filthy habits. Above all we must raise the status of our women."

Wasn't it merely a feminist movement, I asked. He laughed; very likely it was. That implied abolishing veils and introducing silk stockings. Such a movement turned women out of the harem and on to the streets.

Babuschka indignantly assumed that men here can change their wives at a moment's notice, without reference to the authorities. Women can take nothing away but their jewelry: which explains why they wear it all, day and night, on every conceivable part of their persons.

We talked about schools. The young man was of course an ardent devotee of compulsory education and believed that every-



The Elders, Nefer-Hotep and Wife. (Limestone)

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Limestone Statue, V Dynasty.



Lifesize Statue of Renofer II.  
(Limestone)

thing would be achieved by the decline of illiteracy. Finally I inquired about the number of divorces; it appeared that they are twenty times as common at home as they are in Egypt. That astonished the student. Long may it protect the rights of women! I was loth to rob him of that illusion.

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## A THIRD FAMILY

I FIND a certain difficulty in approaching the *pièce de résistance* of the whole museum: those astonishing painted limestone figures of Rahotep and his wife Nofret in the middle of the second room. They date from the third or the beginning of the fourth dynasty, but they look brand new—far newer than the other things we have admired, which for the most part are somewhat more recent. “New” is a word of many meanings. There is no doubt about their genuineness: perish the thought! Finding place and hieroglyphs are in perfect order. If I dared, I should be only too delighted to doubt the authenticity of their style. But as that is not permissible I must accept a new type which introduces a new note into the concert.

Even the arrangement is unusual. Man and wife in like semblance, found in the same tomb, both seated and both the same size, each separate from the other. Each figure has a stone to itself. The man is a royal prince, but utterly commonplace (like our princes), and sits in a compact and commonplace attitude. You would say he was an Egyptian country-cousin, invited to court for some festivity and awestruck in the presence of majesty. It makes him look like a porter: the momentary illusionism of the sculpture and the harsh cigar-colored coat of paint produce that effect. I say “coat of paint” advisedly. The brown stands out with intolerable hardness against the brilliant white seat. It is possible,

of course, that the figure may look strange with the customary polychromy of early sculpture so well preserved; still we have no right to try stripping it. The man is just as naked as other men, wears an apron, and sits there in precisely the usual position. He seems even to be modeled in the usual manner; at any rate one has some difficulty in detecting here and there a tendency to over-modeling, to which one might attribute the fatal impression. Nevertheless he has hardly anything in common with the other male figures; he might belong to another world altogether. The same is true of the woman, the most remarkable female figure in the Museum, although her general attitude conforms to the regular type. She looks like a woman of today. If our family group sometimes reminds us of Corot, we are, so to speak, indulging in a metaphorical feeling and are not concerned with literal facts. This woman never puts us in mind of the lyricism of French painters, with its power to unbalance our sense of reality; she is a living figure of the present day. We saw her counterpart yesterday in the ballroom at Shepheard's Hotel: the wife of X, the famous Paris banker. Mrs. Coolman has something of her too; and so has Frau Behn. She is what one calls a lady, as opposed to a woman; she has the slight chilly sneer of these over-worldly cosmopolitan beings who have style and nothing else. In their "style" I include all those expensive and luxurious tricks, even a certain wit, which one only discovers after all sorts of tentatives. She is well modeled, I fancy. One feels that her body beneath her dress is by no means unshapely. In that she has the advantage over Mrs. Coolman. She has in fact more in common with the oriental genre of Frau Behn. She knows what can be done with it, if it were worth her while. It never is worth her while. She is certainly the nastiest creature that was ever at Shepheard's; but the disinclination for any disturbance makes her a model wife.

The color has a good deal to do with it. The flesh is pale *café au lait*, a trifle curdled; the thick coat betokens the artificial adorn-

ment of the skin. The gay, provocative ornament at the neck and in her raven tresses plays up to it. Inlaid crystal eyes—a marvel of technique, by the way—heighten the impudent effect. A new sort of wax-dummy, one thinks.

The professors maintain that this is the best preserved piece of early sculpture in existence. If our family and the other things looked like this originally, let us thank God that their color has not survived in such perfection. But that they did look thus, as a general rule, I decline to believe. Our family never looked like this. The inlaid eyes alone would have given them a totally different expression. This detail in itself constitutes an impassable barrier between this group and most others. Artificial eyes do occur, but they are never the rule. It is manifest that the progress of naturalism is immensely favored by this trick. Every contrast of material impedes the unity of the rhythm.

The considerations of polychromy point in the same direction. At all events, neither the Havana-tint of the prince nor the curdled complexion of his consort can be recognized with certainty in other statues. Doubtless the colors were always livelier in tone than the extant remains, but they were not so obtrusive. The objects which I have examined in Cairo as carefully as possible do not suggest that the make-up of this show-piece was absolutely normal.

Evidently the savants are not conscious of the importunities of this color-scheme. They are delighted at the perfect preservation and concentrate their whole attention on that alone. To them the ugliness is a consequence of faithful imitation of nature, and in their opinion admits of no discussion. That is what they were like; we must leave it at that. They leave it at that all the more willingly because even they too have noticed how like these figures are the people of our own day. It is quite natural to regard Mrs. Coolman and Frau Behn as anything but exceptional, as normal types of the present day, in fact—or at any rate normal types of globe-trotters.

Whether this applies equally well to the ancient Egyptians is not yet proven.

The problem would delight precisians. Is this show-piece the normal thing, or must we recognize it in countless other masterpieces which lack the finishing touch of inlaid eyes and are undisturbed by any garish naturalism? That is the question. On the one hand, an exceptional piece of a highly specialized type; on the other hand, many pieces which, in spite of manifold differences, combine into a single formal creation. Assuredly it is no private whim that makes us call the Ti or the Ranofer, the Zoser or the diorite statue beautiful. This beauty is as much a solid fact as Mozart's harmony, the structure of Shakespeare's plays, or the sustaining power of Dante's or Goethe's verses; and it may be recognized with the help of these and other values created by man. To doubt that these values, as revealed by esthetics, are interrelated is to doubt beauty itself. At closer range, early Egyptian sculpture acquires its value by comparison with that of Greece and other peoples, with all masterpieces in the same genre. This, and not Rahotep and his wife, is the norm. Let us grant that most pieces, since their color has faded, are no longer in a condition which we can call complete. This is a question for the learned; to us it is of comparatively little interest. Is the beauty of all those pieces less evident on that account? No historical considerations can prevent us from taking the things as they are and basing our judgments on them, for they were made to supply, not the requirements of this or that science, but man's need for beauty; and it must not be forgotten that our real object was to use this need as a means of widening the historian's outlook. That completeness is a tangible affair which in reality aims not so much at perfecting as at establishing a scale of value. This is how we should regard not only Egyptian sculpture, but Egypt as a whole; and not only Egypt, but the world as a whole: as it is, or in other words, as it

strikes our synthetic intelligence, not as it was or might be. We can grasp what is visible with our eyes alone.

Thus we are justified in disregarding a coat of paint which is not there, and which—to return again to our show-piece for the moment—is liable to hinder and estrange our taste. Thus the matter is solved, and we can leave Rahotep and his wife under their glass-case. Still the question, once raised, goes on tickling us: what about that paint? We are too closely involved with these people now to be able to disregard anything that concerns them. Babuschka is always hammering away at it. She disputes with all the Doctors on the score of the authenticity of the Rahotep family and maintains that they have been touched up; then she shows me the remains of the beautiful reliefs which were in the same tomb at Medium and are now in the Museum. Because the reliefs are in bad condition she considers the untouched surface of the two figures as suspicious. I am afraid there isn't much to be said for this ingenious theory. The poor preservation of the reliefs proves nothing, since the two statues were naturally found in a special chamber, and when this was opened in 1871 it was apparently intact. It seems impossible to test it now. There still remains the remarkable difference between the floor on which their feet rest and the other parts. The floor is free from the gleaming white which covers everything else, and its color appears to date from long ago. A little piece has peeled off Madame Rahotep's knee, and there too a quieter color shows through. Changes of color in otherwise intact sculpture are not uncommon. The scribe in the hall of Chefren, and his counterpart (supposed to represent the same man), are disfigured by a rim of verdigris round the eyes which is certainly a later development. Likewise the enameled surface of the flesh-color in the second piece hardly looks original.

It is a difficult matter, in any case, to imagine an elaborate color-scheme for any sculpture, and especially for this. One day, as we discovered some scanty vestiges of colored pattern on the dress of

the woman in our Family, our first feeling was one of perplexity rather than pleasure. We came to see, however, that the remains of color had a certain charm and with their help we succeeded in clothing the figures without spoiling their beauty; it was an experiment, one may say, in which the lack of material evidence left plenty of play to the imagination in its attempt to supply the figures with clothes. But even on this occasion we notice a real and unmistakable difference between the texture and color of our group and that of Rahotep. The color must have been richer and more mobile and the layer of paint much less thick. There was no crude naturalism about our Family.

The supposition that this crudity was general is contradicted by the Egyptians' respect for laws which they can never have disobeyed, or their sculpture would never have reached the height we know. In painting we speak of plastic effect without thinking of sculpture, and mean to imply the painter's ability to convert a flat surface into space. But as soon as the painter begins to take the idea of plasticity literally the spatial magic disappears and painting becomes a banal imitation of another art. In the same way we can talk of the flatness of good sculpture when it converts objects created in space into reliefs, and prize the pictorial play of light without thinking of painting. The ancient Egyptians discovered how to effect these changes. They taught the sculptor compactness, the fundamental condition of sculpture; and they practised this art in its entirety and brought it to the height of perfection. Can we suppose that so inventive a people offered perfection with one hand and with the other deprived the finished product of its finality? That is what we must suppose if we regard as typical the sort of painting found on those two overpraised show-pieces. It is credible, of course; what is not? One can imagine a clumsy sculptor touching up a fresco; and the same thing might happen if production were in the hands of a few artists with a vision of their own, who subsequently left their works to a society which did as it pleased

with them. Such a thing has happened in Europe, and may be happening today. Michelangelo has been painted over and Rembrandt daubed about, and mosaics have been covered with plaster and plaster with paper. And who knows what a modern Mæcenas with a taste for painting mightn't do with his Cézannes and Renoirs, were he not restrained by his respect for their market-value? In all these cases art and the rabble are distinct in kind; and the one is exposed to the incivility of the other. This hypothesis does not apply to ancient Egypt; you may find discrepancies among its productions, but its artists were not isolated individuals. You cannot accuse this art of being grossly inconsequent. The setting may not be to our taste; but the Egyptians liked it; that is to say, it answered to their rhythm. Chess has the same rules at all times and in all places. The make-up of the princely pair, if transferred to the reliefs at Sakkara, would not interfere with the real effect of those admirable decorations. Just as well-preserved traces of color, there and elsewhere, are dependent on the orderly combination of painting and relief, in which the graphic aspect of the relief plays the leading part, so we may be sure the sculptor of statues in the round took precedence of the painter. Color provided the complementary accompaniment. That need not exclude lively colors; and we must get used to the idea at once. But painting can never have made a caricature of the sculptor's work and turned art into naturalism. The painter too must have obeyed a canon of laws. Perhaps we shall approximate to the truth if we give the painting the rôle of the libretto in an opera. We must not, of course, think of Richard Wagner, but rather of *The Magic Flute*. We are hardly doing the Egyptians too much honor by transferring to their sculpture such a delicate web of words and music. They found an ideal medium in the white limestone which absorbed the color; it served their purpose as well as the adoption of oil-technique served modern painting. It is hard to differentiate adequately between the artistic activities of this period.

And what about Rahotep and his wife? The only explanation remaining is to attribute their peculiarities to the particular desires of the man who ordered them to be made; among these desires we must include the use of artificial eyes. These extremely costly eyes are of crystal with silver points for the pupils. Perhaps they were fashionable in a certain privileged class; at all events they cramped the plastic effect and put special difficulties in the way of the painter, whose business it was to prevent their seeming like foreign bodies. Less naturalistic glass eyes were also in use.

There is something abnormal to me about the way in which the married pair are fashioned out of separate blocks with no connection between them. Why are they not together? Was the man originally alone and was the woman added later? Was she substituted for another during the prince's lifetime? There is no discoverable resemblance between her and the wife of the prince on the reliefs; but the condition of these reliefs and the conventions of all relief-sculpture prevent our applying this test.

Possibly Rahotep and his cold-hearted wife belonged to a special class of Egyptians about whom we know less than we know about the rest of these stone people. This is the most probable hypothesis; it enlarges our ideas about the social structure of ancient Egypt, which seemed to us so easy to compass. Alongside our "Family" and "The Elders" this disunited couple forms a third category which never lacks in any cultivated society, and least of all in one where princes are to be found. The representation, to us only too convincing in its naturalism, corresponds with our idea that we have here a nightmare-vignette of modern marriage.

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## KING ZOSER'S EAR

INVOLUNTARILY one gets more and more involved in the web. We were at Abusir. We climbed the fallen pyramid of Neferer-kere, which dates from the fifth dynasty, and had a beautiful view from the top; after that we scrambled about among the remains of the temple of Sahure and Nehuserre, which Borchardt has excavated. Black basalt slabs with white limestone walls resting on a black basalt plinth. The walls were painted and we can imagine the effect. Then there are palm-columns: the two best-preserved examples stand in the hall of Chefren at the museum, round shafts with high palm-leaf capitals. The allusion to the natural prototype is unmistakable; and when I was told about such columns in Europe, I disliked the idea and thought of Arab rubbish. Frightful garish imitations, with which European architects of Egyptian halls do homage to the *genius loci*, did their bit. The palm-column is better in practice than in theory. The leaf turns to stone, the trunk to column; and the stone-mason effaces every uncomfortable recollection of nature with his tool. He places the eight sharp-pointed leaves of the capital close together and obtains even surfaces with ribbed ornament. The leaves bend over above and form a sort of crown. Out of this the abacus rises to support the architrave; the abacus is carved in one piece with the capital, and is the one part which is not quite satisfactory, to our way of thinking. The capital

finishes at the bottom in a very simple and beautiful way with a band of slightly convex rings; and its connection with the shaft is perfectly convincing. The material adopted for the shafts was fine granite of various colors—in particular a striking red. How wonderful it must have looked against the black basalt!

As a counterpart at the entrance to the first hall of the museum they have set up the two columns from the somewhat later temple of Unar, the last king of the fifth dynasty. The ribs of the palm-branches are here suppressed and the branch has become a leaf. Only the outlines and the beautiful veining in the center remain: a very happy simplification. Another remarkable type of column appears in the temple of Sahure: the reed-column, a type which survives in various forms to the latest period. The shaft consists of several—I believe eight—stalks, which are not round but elliptical in section, with sharp angles where they intersect; these angles lie on the circumference of the circle and form the rounded shape. The bundle tapers at the base, making it appreciably thinner: an arrangement which at first disturbs us, so that we have some trouble in adjusting our minds to it. Our sense of the organic helps. It is wonderful how the mason helps himself to nature and how he restrains it. A discreet leaf-ornament at the foot indicates the growth of the bundle from a root and gives a reason for the taper. The capital is evolved out of a tulip-like flower, but the vigor of the style has made it capable of bearing a load. No naturalism awakes our skepticism and distorts the stone; if you saw a row of these columns side by side, the last sense of strangeness would disappear. Borchardt has traced the origin of all these columns to the flora of Egypt. The lotus is the mother of the reed-column. Is that the origin of the Greek column? It is an exciting question, enough to make one turn archeologist. It's a pity that they didn't exhibit the two columns in the temple of Sahure where they would have contributed to the enlivening of the other fragments. In the museum nobody notices them.

At Sakkara Mr. Firth showed us his excavations of the remains of the temple of Zoser. Zoser was the first king of the third dynasty and at the beginning of the third millennium he caused the erection of the first great stone building in the history of the world. The wise Imhotep was the architect: so runs the tradition. An inscription has now been found which confirms it. This Imhotep was Zoser's physician, minister and architect—a significant combination in this civilization—and is perhaps the first artist with personal responsibilities. Only fragments of this temple have come to light, but they are exceedingly notable. Here too we find pieces of reed-columns which are still nearer the original type and, what is more, completely remote from naturalism. Actually a greater number of stalks are here gathered into the bundle. The most striking fact, and the one which we were least prepared to find here, was the fluted column anticipating the Greek. The fluting is executed with the utmost neatness and is already endowed with the special charm which we were inclined to associate only with Greek temples. How curious: five minutes ago we were discussing the possibility of an Egyptian origin for Greek architecture and recognizing the reed-column as an insoluble obstacle; and here was the answer. Borchardt would like to find a botanic origin for the fluted column too, and is in favor of parsley. He will have nothing to do with Greece; but appearances are against him. Parsley can stay in the garden; it is of no consequence, for once your mind is set on natural prototypes it is a short step to the cellular structure of the fluting. From these beginnings to Doric is no long course of development; and one cannot dispense with such processes, for any association that helps us to pick our way through the chaos of humanity is too dear to us. Fluted columns existed, then, two thousand five hundred years before Olympia and the Parthenon; and later, in the New Kingdom, plenty of Greeks came to the delta, so that no further connection is required. It is noteworthy that in the temple of Zoser the columns do not yet stand free,

but are joined by a narrow neck to the façade. In this and many other details we may trace the previous wood-architecture, which of course lay still closer to plant-forms. The stone imitates wood, especially in the round logs used for ceilings and the like. None the less, we find no technical restrictions of any sort. They have already achieved the incomparable skill in stone-working which must have needed, one would say, the practice of centuries.

We are thus approaching the start of the history of the giants. Mr. Firth takes these things with due caution and sucks his pipe. I should so much like to know a lot of things that neither Mr. Firth nor anybody else can tell me; and it is a great comfort, when one's fancy is about to break out, to catch sight of that dry expression of his. It makes one think of a tracker. Mr. Firth shows us two beautifully modeled male feet, broken off smooth. They are the remains of a seated figure, whose body has apparently disappeared. Not long ago the Zoser, which is now in the museum, was found here. That was a great day for the tracker. All at once a man emerged from the heaps of sand and rubbish. Now Firth hopes to find the tomb of Imhotep the wise, which must be somewhere quite close. Possibly we are standing on the very spot.

I met Junker, who is digging at Gizeh. He too has no doubts about the connection between the fluted and the Doric column. He thinks that the fluted type is the direct consequence of the reed-type, if you take the cross-section into account and reverse the projecting ornament. He is quite right; now there is no need to be surprised any more at the simultaneous arrival of the two forms.

The Zoser in the museum is not naked like Chefren and the others, but wears a thin garment which covers body and limbs and leaves only the hands free. At first I thought that was a sign of the early date and pointed to a series of conceptions which changed as men came to exalt the body in its nakedness; but it must actually be connected with cult-ceremonies which are independent of date. In any case the clothes do not imply an imperfect com-

mand of anatomy; the head and the parts which the drapery hardly conceals are too definite for that. Neither can we say that the result is less dignified. Perhaps more personal: which suits the strange impression created by the discovery of a personal and newly created architecture in the ruins of the temple of Zoser. Perhaps it is simply imagination. A personal atmosphere surrounds the statue of Zoser; again we have an unmistakable type. His face is not at all handsome, with its prominent jaw and projecting lips; and it seems even more strongly characterized than Chefren himself. Seldom, moreover, do we see so clearly as here the strap which fastened the artificial beard symbolic of royal majesty. By wrapping him up they thought to conceal the king's humanity from mortal gaze. In representing the king thus, did the sculptor conceive of his model as a god? The difference between man and mythical dignity can hardly have escaped him. At all events, it does not escape us; though the difference does not diminish the impression, but rather enhances and confirms it, as though we were able by its means to gaze through to the real seat of majesty. The artist was not inspired by any desire for ceremony. The light garment may have been ornamental, but it dispenses with the arts of costume and acts as an artistic device of the sculptor's to embrace and ennable the pathos of the forms. This mode of treating drapery was to lead in Greece, in a later and lesser age, to a game of agile charm. The Greeks never achieved a non-decoration expression of human dignity.

The face is grievously damaged; the eyes are broken away, and the nose is smashed. Only the ears remain, for they are saved by being embedded in the royal headdress. They are not the peculiar mussel-shells that man carries on his head; but parts of his face, a compact, inseparable organ, modeled as though with a stroke of the brush, and of a reality bordering on the miraculous. We imagined that only our art, with its pictorial preoccupations, possessed the secret of such modeling. For the sake of this ear alone

one almost feels inclined to give Zoser precedence over all the other royal statues.

Firth has just sent to the museum still another sculpture found in his temple, the pair of heads carved out of one piece of granite, which appear to have rested on a wall—perhaps the boundary-wall. They do not suit either Zoser's ear or the fluted columns, but rather have some of the harsh pride of our medieval knights. That too they can do in the early dynasties; what, indeed, can they not? In the hall at the museum stands the remarkable catafalque of Osiris with the falcon on the body and the four falcons at the head and feet. There is a medieval note about this catafalque as well. Egyptologists assign it to the twentieth dynasty or even later. Dr. Ebert, who has lately come to live at the convent, believes it to be quite early and thinks the inscription was added afterwards. The falcon of Chefren is similar in style, and the whole work has a bewitched look of naïve mysticism that one scarcely associates with a late period. Already we have had surprising experiences with dates here. The different interpretations vary by the trifling amount of one or two thousand years. Egyptian stylistic criticism is still in the cradle.

Zoser is the oldest royal statue in the hall of Chefren, but not by a long way the oldest in the museum. A case in the prehistoric room upstairs contains an earlier piece on a smaller scale: the seated king Chasechem made of a dark green stone resembling basalt. Exactly half the face survives, enough for a profile. This king is clothed also; he wears the mantle with a collar, covering the breast—perfectly simple though as unmistakable as ever—and the tall king's headdress. The representation is not in the least degree primitive; its conscious simplification is suggestive rather of archaism. The edge of the headdress over the ear is carved with the greatest possible delicacy and with an obvious relish for the sharp arabesque, which is of a type reintroduced at a later period. Archaic and archaic go hand in hand in Egypt, and the difference between them is far less crude than in European antiquity.

The only clear indication of an early period lies in the figure-drawings, apparently of vanquished enemies, scratched on the base of the simple throne. Here we are indubitably on ancient ground. King Chasechem belonged to the so-called second dynasty, of which we know about as much as we know of the inhabitants of the moon. With Chasechem we mount into the fourth millennium. In front of this work one can guess that stone-sculpture was preceded by woodcarving; though it is by no means certainly established. Chasechem must already be a member of a long series. Opposite him in the case is a crouching figure in red granite, which is also said to portray a legendary king. Finally we have a really primitive figure, though this too is unquestionably thought out in terms of stone. The figures in the earliest Romanesque portals have the same clumsy look. The learned maintain that this unknown king belongs to the same second dynasty as the carefully chiselled Chasechem, who looks at least a thousand years younger. When and where did the change occur? How did the clumsy image first become living stone? As soon as the dynasties are correctly accounted for we shall already be a step nearer the interesting moment. Thus Chasechem might perhaps say: "The first proper sculpture was made in my grandfather's time." But of course every one has said that about himself. One must become an archeologist.

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## THE LITTLE RED HOUSE

THEY are digging at the pyramids at Sakkara, in Upper Egypt, everywhere. It is the chic thing for American millionaires to dig in the desert, and every great European power supports colonies of investigators. The results go to the museum, and you can keep what is left over. It's all in order. If only they would excavate with a little system and do the most important things first. It would be all the easier since the whole country is more or less plotted out for the convenience of tourists by means of the stars in Baedeker. We have already reached the burning question: "Which is the more important—Zoser or Tutankhamen (whom we call Tutchen for short)?" They ought first to concentrate all their attention on the pyramids of Gizeh and excavate before anything else the temples belonging to the pyramid of Cheops. Judging by the gateway of Chefren, which sheltered the diorite statue, the temple of the great pyramid might be expected to produce works of at least equal importance. We know the site; it lies under the Bedouin village, and the excavations would entail the dispossession of the natives, which is an expensive undertaking, but not unsurmountably so.

Babuschka forbade further discussion. She was shocked at the idea of emptying the village and confined her share in the conversation to the remark that it would be a disgrace. I reminded her

that such expropriations were undertaken by railways and other praiseworthy institutions and must not be regarded in too sentimental a light, seeing that they were inevitable occurrences. In addition the victims often turned the circumstances to their own advantage. An American would take every possible precaution to indemnify them adequately.

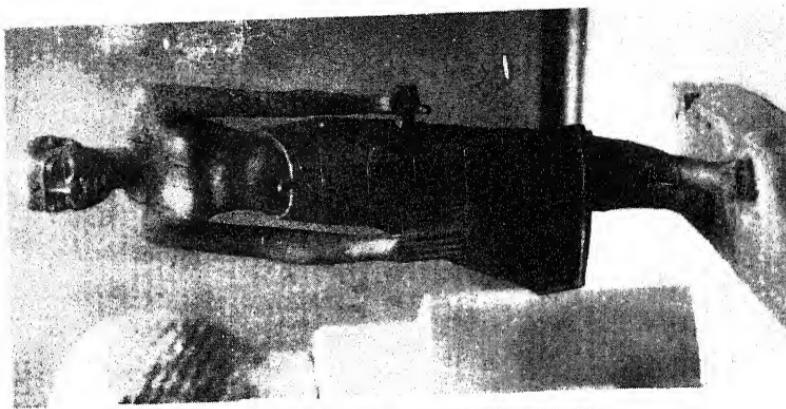
Her opposition grew. There was a little red house in the village which you could see from our hill. This poor little red house, as insignificant as may be, and in any case a mere spot of color at sunset, seemed more important to her than any research. Even the idea that the house might shelter a work as important as the Zoser failed to appeal to her. She persisted that it would be a disgrace. Finally, as I saw she was simply arguing for the sake of argument, I lost my temper and went to the extreme length of maintaining that it would be a good thing if they diverted the Nile and excavated Cairo if there was any chance of finding a temple of the Old Kingdom with palm and reed-columns. The columns must of course be quite intact. Thereupon she twitted me with nationalism and declared that I wanted to restore the Prussian monarchy. Her logic takes singular turns at times.

Her remarks apply not only to excavations, of course, but also to the excavators. Perhaps they matter more; in which case there is something to be said for Babuschka. If people can make nothing of the finds, then they have no right to touch the little red house. Do Egyptologists rifle tombs or do they discover things? Mr. Coolman and Herr Behn won't let any diorite statue put it across them. Jean, lay the table in the desert! Even if 99 per cent of the human race were like that—which is hardly the case—the question need never arise. Even if there were only a hundred Egyptologists, and they alone had some reasonable notions about diorite, it would still be justifiable to make away with the little red house. Up and at 'em, even if the whole world's against you! Long live fanaticism!

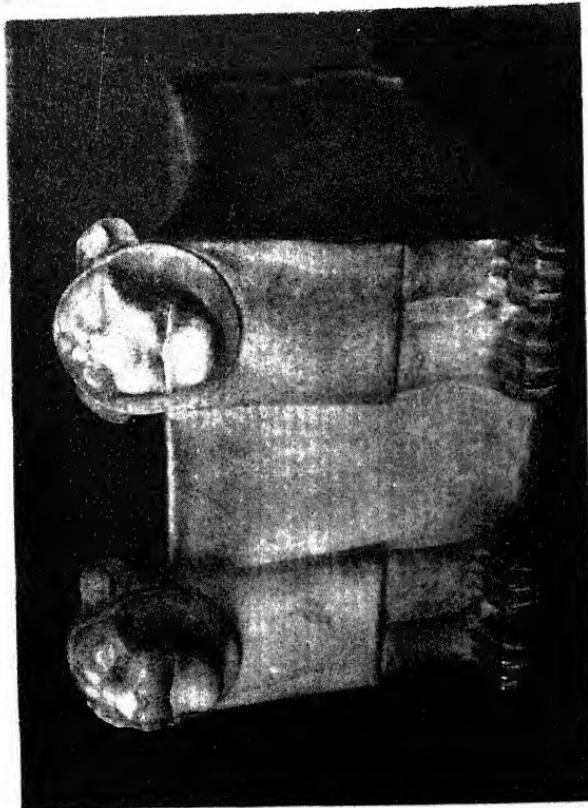


Rahotep and Nofret. (Limestone)

Wooden Statue of a Priest. Old Kingdom.



Sacrificial Stone. III Dynasty.



A hundred people are all you can count on, when it comes to excavating. Even a hundred is probably too many.

Is that reasonable, though? Does it lead to fanaticism? There have been fanatics—Champollion, for instance, who discovered the key to the hieroglyphs a hundred years ago. The first Frenchmen who dug here were fanatics; and so were the first Germans. The urbane instinct in our family, not history but art, drove them on. Even Mariette, who in the fifties put handcuffs on the greedy consuls who were itching to finger and touch and who organized the government excavations—even he was a fanatic too. He brought the main things together, and in his own lifetime the museum he founded changed a great deal. People now blame his methods for their scientific shortcomings, because he failed to note the finding-places with sufficient accuracy; but they forget what came out of this unsystematic method and what interests were at stake. What is the good of measuring and quibbling when the ground is on fire beneath your feet? Before you can arrange, you must first have something to arrange; and Mariette was determined to bring as much as possible together as quickly as possible, so as to provide something to work on. He had to cope with the appetite of his own compatriots and the indifference of the Egyptians. Eugénie wanted a finger in the pie and Ismail Pasha, always short of money, could never say no. Mariette's fanaticism was directed against Napoleon III and Ismail, and Egypt remained in Egypt. It was not such a simple matter; and neither time nor inclination were left for more exact investigations.

None of the masters, real or self-styled, of modern Egypt have bothered their heads at all about the ancient monuments, except upon occasion to convert them into bakshish. The caliphs of today cling to such power as they can get these days and are much too honest and lazy to exchange it for the pomp and circumstance of the Pharaohs. The High Commissioner, who looks after their incomes and without whom the king would long since have been

on the ground beside his little throne, is their Pharaoh. The more practical Egyptians regard the ruins as a good advertisement; but all without exception regard them as the foreigner's province exclusively.

Egypt swarms with plutocrats. Nowhere is there so abrupt a cleft between the upper and the lower orders, for there is no native middle class. Actually there is nothing between a millionaire and a beggar, unless you count the dragomans as a category by themselves. The intervening ranks are all importations: Greeks, Syrians, Italians and Levantines. One often has the impression that the whole population wandered in only a moment or two ago. The rich have fine cars; and their indescribably voluminous and highly painted ladies, real Beckmann and Kleinschmidt types, buy their clothes in Paris. The display in the jewelers' windows sparkles like the Rue de la Paix. Paris means fashion. The great Paris firms have branches in the main streets and disgorge the most monstrous objects. All the caricatures of European industry are here. A supreme jumble of incompatible things prevails in the villas and palaces: Arab, European, exotic and Parisian, all gaudy and a bit dirty, a real oriental gramophone-style. In Alexandria you can also find collections of French Impressionists; and the other day I was shown a faked Lenbach. One thing only you never find: the smallest morsel of real Egypt. A very old house near the Muski, with nice wooden shutters behind which you imagine houris lurking, is full of Egyptian antiquities. They were collected during the last fifty years by a Swiss merchant who died the other day; and a pleasant Swabian housekeeper of his now hawks the things round for pretty good prices. In the well-to-do part by the Nile ancient Egypt is not considered smart; the nearest they get to it is a gilt bronze Osiris cast in Vienna and serving as an electric chandelier. The Pharaohs give their names to dives. Every village has its Tunkhamen-Bar; and in the brothel-quarter of Cairo near the fish market, where a nocturnal promenade for Babuschka's benefit cost

me five pounds, there is a shadowy retreat called *Chez Rameses*.

What is more curious is the complete absence of any trace of it among the more or less intellectual circles of the so-called patriots. Their prevailing idea is hatred of the English, whom they would like to turn out, along with all other Europeans, at the first possible moment. They often complain of the English, rather less often of the rest. But they are partial to none of us; and if it really came to the point, even the most cherished guests, among whom we may count ourselves, would have to pack their trunks. That must wait for a while, for the protectors are on the watch and the Fellaheen perhaps enjoy their indolence punctuated by an occasional massacre. The rich Egyptians support England, however; and the English, shrewd as ever, support them. But for the hated English, the exploitation of the working-classes would be even more selfish and stupid. On the whole, the Nationalists produce a rather dour impression, and look as if they are no use except when very young, like the native women. Anybody with connections here can easily make money, and then the heat makes him slack. The most flourishing industry is bakshish, the cadging of tips.

It is not surprising that the English question eclipses all others. The protectors have a firm hand on the Nile in the Sudan and thousands of muscular fingers in the civil service. In every province there sits a magistrate who passes over everything that doesn't affect English interests with a friendly smile; refuses at any price to bother himself with what doesn't concern him; lets every visitor say what he pleases and then says the last word himself with an inscrutable smile. The standing theme of patriots in government positions is the difference between their emoluments and those of the magistrates, who are also paid by the State.

Apart from this, the water-supply is the main topic of interest. There is enough water to turn every inch of desert into a green carpet, and such land will produce a turnover ten times its value. But it is not easy to obtain the necessary permission, for too much

cotton must on no account be grown. The price of cotton is the factor on which all Egyptian politics depend. Everything else is what the Russians used to call *nichevo*, and which they call *malesh* here. *Malesh* disposes of every difficulty. There is one man, however, who doesn't say *malesh* and who gives the English some hard nuts to crack: Zaghlul, an old man with the head of a fanatic. Downstairs at meal-times Dettenberg is his enthusiastic partisan; in addition, ninety per cent of the people back him up. If you give a cabman his address, he cheers, and his nags gallop of their own accord. Zaghlul can't be bought with any amount of bakshish, not even with an opportunist policy which might help his affairs along. He is a Cato of monumental single-mindedness, quite blind to any intellectual appeal that is not of immediate interest to his cause and as philistine as Bismarck.

The single-mindedness of these patriots makes them neglect accessible means of propaganda which they might find in old monuments. It means nothing to them that what they consider strangers' business grew up in their country, and belongs to it as much as the Nile and the desert, and is part of the organism of Egypt. Are they Egyptians? They are untouched by that sense of the present in the past, by that mystery which overwhelms us foreigners like a personal experience. Modern and ancient Egypt have about as much in common as mosque and pyramid. Two worlds exist here together side by side; and the one—the older, the primeval and worthiest to receive all honor—the one to which we are indebted for the fashioning of a civilization of inestimable grandeur, is treated as an accidental mineralogical growth. Nay, even more indifferently than that; for if instead of a stately temple the earth hid coal or iron, no little red house would be safe from desecration, and their tackle would long ago have changed the face of the countryside. But that's quite another thing, they say; one can be a patriot without taking an interest in art. Really they are interested in nothing but cotton; and the question arises as to whether

people with such limited aims have any right to own a country. The dualism of ancient and modern Egypt strikes me as hardly less unnatural than the English regime. The difference between an Egyptian kaftan and the tartan kilt of the Scottish garrison is superficial: merely a species of artistic curiosity.

At times the patriots make us feel that they cherish an invincible aversion for the things we adore. Simply because we adore them, they will not. An honest fanatic said to me quite frankly: "But for these things we should have fewer foreigners in Cairo; I should have no objection to shipping them all off to Europe." There was something in his tone that perplexed me. This fanatic was not prepared to sacrifice the little red house; but afterwards he proposed as a bargain to surrender Gizeh, Sakkara and the Cairo Museum in return for ten thousand popular schools. Naturally we were to provide the personnel of these schools along with the other equipment; so he didn't really want to be quit of Europe. I saw our chance and offered him all the masters and schoolbooks of the Prussian regime, and was even prepared to throw in a couple of thousand obsolete sergeant-majors and generals. The inconsistency escaped him, and he was obviously beaten. His fanaticism wore thin and turned into moral enthusiasm; I advised him to try Bolshevism.

Only among the people, if anywhere, are there some traces of the old order: among the Fellahs and the Nubians, who look fantastically like the limestone-people now and then, and perhaps really are like them. Indefinable traces of the Arab, and, among the Copts, of Christianity remain untouched. Meyerhof, the eye-specialist and orientalist, has found receipts which go back to the Ptolemies and even earlier. In popular superstition you still catch reflections of the primeval belief in Osiris. When some years ago the royal mummies once hidden in the rock-caves of Der-el-bahri were shipped here from Luxor, processions of mourners formed on the river-banks and the people sang dirges.

Dreamy superstition can never reason; but if the Egyptians imagine that they can fill up the holes in their instinctive life by combating illiteracy they are about as wide of the mark as the prohibitionists in America.

Champollion and his people did not rely on cold facts when they discovered the ancient world in Egypt, but pursued a dream which was distinguished from superstition by the possibility it contained of an organic extension of the sphere it affected. Mariette aimed at an Egypt for the Egyptians, a dream which those who have profited by it prefer to forget. The Egyptologists remain; it is questionable whether the savants of today have preserved enough of the spirit of the first pioneers.

We fell in with a couple of native intellectuals—quiet, sympathetic people who disbelieved in catchwords, even in the standaridized hatred of England, and who refused to accept Zaghlul. There seems to be a small self-contained group with the most laudable intentions, but quite ineffectual; one could discuss anything with them. Only when we came to the pyramids of Gizeh did they fail to come up to scratch; at that they retired behind conversational commonplaces.

In Paris, where they have got everything, there is a literature dealing with modern Egypt as well. We read two of their novels with pleasure. One, the famous *Goha*, was recommended by Octave Mirbeau who rightly praises the truthfulness of the picture; it contains a thrilling scene where the superstitious idiot clasps the statue of Isis which he believes is alive and threatening him. The other novel, which I like almost better than *Goha*, is *Mansour*, by Bonjean and Achmed Deif. The scene of both is laid in Cairo between the mosque and the harem, and both illustrate the life of Islam; but even if they contained what I am looking for, still they are hardly what one calls literature.

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## THE MUSEUM AND ART

PERHAPS there really is a beautiful statue of Cheops hiding under the little red house; or even—it lies within the realms of possibility—a whole row of Cheops statues. And if you swept the whole village away, a temple might come to light, even grander than the gateway of Chefren. Then we should have a new ruin, inviting our inspection and helping us to trace a step or two further the development of the column and finally solve the disputed problem of the fluting; and the museum would acquire a new object, or a whole row of new objects. As a matter of fact there would be no room for them in the magazine at Cairo; even as it is, the ground floor is completely full. There is such a superfluity of even the best things—the works of the early dynasties—that they treat the limestone like so much common stone. Few people guess how much there is in the six cases in the dark niches of the first room and in the cupboards in the great corridor, how much stands and hangs about in every nook and cranny. Fewer still stop at the case near the entrance, although they are in a good light, because the colossal statues distract their attention. In these cases there are small studies of movement taken from servants and workmen of the early period which weave a whole network of threads that bind their lives with ours. In the dim corridor between the colossal statues the net turns into an abandoned web.

The museum, or magazine, is a senseless building in the conceited style of government buildings in large European cities, better adapted for a bank or public-house. The instinct of the people who manage it is on a par with it. The only use they have made of the place is to stuff it as full as it will hold; they have done their best to obstruct intelligent criticism, which would give prominence to the best things, and to bar the way to any imaginative use of it. The only things that are worthily shown are the commonplace late pieces in the hall. Upstairs, in the best light, the rooms are filled to suffocation with innumerable mummy-cases and mummies, along with every sort of ethnographical junk. There too is the great sensation: Tutankhamen in all his glory. "No photographing or drawing allowed here!" is written up in every known language; and the spectators hold their breath. They lap up the overladen luxury of the furniture and vessels of this late period as if it were pure manna; lick their lips over the gold of the state-bier with its red-tongued heads of beasts, a stage-property of the cheapest sort, over the bright inlay of the little chair, over the walking-sticks with human heads; and marvel at the senseless display of fantasy in alabaster, those pinnacles of tastelessness. Egypt did everything that Europe had to do all over again; creating immortal patterns in the arts and crafts, and also in the course of her long career touching the lowest depths of decadence. Finally the time came when the inspiration of the pyramid-builders ran dry and the artists were left with only the virtuosity of their accomplished hands. By a freak of chance it was precisely this tomb of Tutankhamen that came to light with all its paraphernalia intact. These things, which, apart from their historical importance, were only fit to calm the vulgar-est discontent, ought to have been put away in the darkest room, or else exported to the Argentine: a better plan, since that is where they would be most appreciated. In its present state of arrangement the Cairo museum, though filled to satiety with the noblest works, only leads people astray. Those who look may certainly find the

real values: or at any rate, some of them. A good part remains inaccessible even to the most diligent. But those who do not bring the right instinct with them go away empty, and imagine that in the solid gold Tutchens they have seen the crown of Egypt.

If digging goes on, they will have to build a new museum. Rockefeller has promised ten million dollars if the Egyptians will take it up. Ought they not really to decline it? Ought they not stop all excavations for the time being and to devote themselves to setting their ideas in order? I don't mean only their historical ideas; they have made wonderful progress in that direction these last few years. I mean their sense of value, by means of which Egypt may really help us. Oh, I know what to do with Rockefeller; nobody must refuse his generous offers. I can think of an Egyptian museum of endless utility, and no further digging would be needed to supply it. There is more than enough already in the material stacked in Cairo. The new museum must be devoted to the Old Kingdom alone, and the works of this golden age must be so arranged in a special building that each single piece as well as the total effect may have the fullest scope: a museum with a couple of halls and a quantity of intimate little rooms of various sizes. The contents of many a cupboard now crammed thoughtlessly to the brim would be enough for a whole room. In the intimate atmosphere the enchantment of Egypt would unfold before the spectator. Thus we should have a Tribuna for Egypt; the present museum would then do for the Middle and New Kingdoms. Instead of this they are now agitating in English circles for a Tutschen-Museum.

I certainly have nothing to say against the further investigation of the soil of Egypt as long as the results are of more than purely scientific interest and profit. Is such a profitable outcome conceivable? Can Egypt help us? Unless you open out a heavy screen to keep off the sun, it will overwhelm you. One's good fortune in being here warms the old Adam and stirs up all the organs of perception. You come here for the sake of your kidneys and ex-

perience a renewal of your whole activity. Round this private enjoyment grows the frame of an immense history. Assuredly it is no accident that here humanity discovered form. If Egyptian art towers heaven-high above us we still have our share of it as we have of the sun. It is our firmament. This fact is not to be imputed to an indifferent past. Superiority and inferiority are of no consequence alongside this spasmodic relationship. Besides the positive, which either blinds us or does not, there emerged here in the course of history the negative as well: everything that keeps man from reaching the heights, or staying there. In this negative we may find all the limitations of our own day, all our own inhibitions. In a drama, simplified by its remoteness, we see unfolded the life history of art. That is something beyond connoisseurship and science. All the possible relations between man and art, of which we have experienced at home only a few shadowy evening scenes, are staged in this theater and fill it with excitement. It is interesting and profitable to learn the moral of this piece. Whether we can recover some of these values for our own art I do not know. That is another matter; seeing that we are through with our Latin it is a question of some urgency, and though it is a delicate matter we must face up to it. The thought of Egypt becoming fashionable and inflaming Mr. Coolman and Herr Behn makes one's hair stand on end.

Egypt must be brought nearer to us, not only because she was our mother long ago, but also because she contains things which come very close to our instincts and ought to come still closer. Is the shortening of the distance the best way to achieve this ideal Egyptology? Let there be no popularization, contradicting the serious pursuit of science; we desire of it nothing but a fanatically disinterested pursuit of an idea which creates a sense of values. This involves a clear demonstration of the difference between Zoser and Tutchén and the absolute partisanship for the better cause. If this is not the business of Egyptology, then Egyptology is no business of ours. As long as criticism passes as unscientific the advance is

retarded even in science as well, and its uses are confined to illusory classifications and statistics without any relevance. This refusal to take sides leads to a falsification of values against which one must take every possible precaution.

It is scarcely practicable, however, for a science inspired by the noblest convictions to divest itself of its terminology. The incorporation of Egypt into the spiritual world of Europe requires other forces. Art is only advanced by artists: that is an axiom long since accepted. The great discoveries in the history of art, all its fundamental principles upon which the concept of the nature of art reposes, were made by artists, by the artistic instincts of creative beings who devoted their proper gifts to this pursuit. They were concerned to give a practical turn to their discoveries. The history of the development of modern art follows logically upon the lucky experiments of painters. We must approach Egypt as the Renaissance approached the antique, as Greece was approached in the days of Winckelmann and Goethe, as the Venetians and Dutch and Spaniards were approached in the great days of French painting. The enthusiasm of the discoverer may be mistaken in many details, but the discovery was of imperishable importance in its power to inspire. Lessing rose above the Laocoon. Even in miserable copies Goethe divined the gods of Greece. These pioneers would assuredly have been better off had they had some archeological preparation; and had they possessed the works of Phidias and his predecessors the artists of that day would doubtless have been spared many tiresome detours. But the creative instinct of the finder matters more than what he finds. Winckelmann's tears of admiration before the Apollo Belvedere have not cleansed that unwholesome composition; but its melancholy has given Winckelmann's work its catastrophic force which finally carried his ideas beyond his reach. Here too we may observe the transformations of art; the dreams of the idealists led to the healthy realism of the nineteenth century.

Can a like development fall to the lot of the Pharaohs and their legacy? The importance of their work is never called in question; and the number of originals of the best period is at least tenfold compared with the remains of Greece. Where are their Winckelmann and their Goethe? Will they come?

Egypt came late upon the scene, with some archeological preparation, but deprived of many supports enjoyed by Greece: an auxiliary literature, in the first place. For us Egyptian poetry has only a historical interest. Even if the present scanty remains were multiplied we should still be faced with a blank wall. The products of the "Scribes" of the early dynasties may well play their part as forerunners of Semitic, and finally European, literature: that is apparently well established. All the same we cannot detect here such a spark as leapt to the later poetry of the north from Greek tragedy—to say nothing of Homer. The Egyptians were evidently people whose eyes meant most to them and who could not invest their hieroglyphs with the vehemence of their plastic works. Hellenic influence among us was furthered by the Greek language, an instrument whose classic structure outshines all the temples of Greece. Then came Greek philosophy, which is the foundation of our own. That too, students believe, found its inspiration in Egypt, but the root lies too far from the fruit. Moreover the history of that glorious people gave Greek art its wings. Where can we stop?

The way to the Delta lies through Italy and Hellas; but these resting-places may obstruct us as much as they help us. For its inspiration Europe looks neither to the right of seniority nor to that of beauty. Charm is what counts. If it works, nothing can stop the triumphal progress of Egypt. Will it work?

The last great invasion of Europe came from Japan. The painters who fell for Hokusai and his compatriots fifty or sixty years ago were not impelled by any general interest in an unknown people, but simply by their delight in the flat color and the drawing of the woodcut. The influence was not simply a vogue; for the fashion

passed off and disappeared directly. To art, however, the contact proved of permanent use. Japan helped painters in a new direction and this led to a universal movement. Today, now that superiority of China over Japan has long been appreciated and the quality of those late Japanese woodcuts is no longer accepted unreservedly, the fruits of that invasion are none the less a part of the European tradition. When the history of art entered into serious relations with the Far East, painting had long since made its choice. In this case an archeology with a more discriminating sense of values would hardly have helped much. Round about 1870 a clarifying process was needed to enable painting to achieve fugitive effects, especially of color. That need Japan supplied.

There are no artists in Egypt. They alone could effect the union and transfuse the discovery into the blood of Europe. No artist could remain unmoved here. Is there passion enough? Our art is so sated with eclecticism that the expansion in all directions had made the body too thin. Not volatilization, but the very opposite, is what it needs now; and it will find it in the static character of Egyptian art. All architecture, be it only the servant of utilitarian needs, can learn something from the pyramids. They strike me as the *locus classicus* of every modern structural idea and must in the long run supersede Greco-Roman models in general use, not from any desire for imitation, but as a spiritual exercise. It is not easy, however, to detect the precise spot where the spark will catch. Our sculpture, which ought to be particularly susceptible to charm, has hardly any practitioners left to guide it; and the decline in creative force has hit it hardest. Science alone is digging; possibly the Egyptologists are really the last heirs.

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## CLINICAL DETAILS

FOR some days we have had Dr. Aller, a German doctor, living here. He is an extraordinarily thin and wiry man with blazing eyes; and he practices in a little town near Minyeh. He has been overdoing it, and is going back to Europe on leave. There are too many sick *schweinigel* in Egypt. *Schweinigel* is the second word of Cologne dialect that he has used. The lady from Krostewitz won't listen to his stories; there is trouble enough in the world already, she thinks, and one can't deny it. We haven't come to listen to each patient's symptoms; at all events, not at mealtimes. Dr. Aller wants an outlet; I'm sure he doesn't talk in order to impress us with his knowledge. I don't believe his stories are addressed to us in particular; I think I'd really better introduce him to Meyerhof.

Dr. Meyerhof is our only near acquaintance here; and we quite often go and see him for a quarter of an hour in the afternoon. Between two patients he looks in when we are talking to his sister in his little private room, and shows us a carpet of interesting weave or a Coptic stuff he has just acquired, or what not, talks about orientalia, Persian miniatures, or Damascus faïence, of which he owns a collection of fragments. He has translated Arabic poems, is a light among the eye-specialists, and is worshipped by the Egyptians. I believe his practice as a doctor and his importance as an

orientalist go hand in hand. Even Röhricht admires him; but his hobby prevents him from being a specialist. As soon as he comes into the back room he picks up something in his collection to show us, probably in order to give his own eyes a change. Then he goes back to his patients.

Dr. Aller is somewhat wanting in this respect. Yesterday Joshua Dohn lectured him on the Old Kingdom—the usual story. I noticed that Dr. Aller wasn't taking in a single syllable and was fast asleep with his eyes wide open. Only when Joshua Dohn in his poetic fashion referred to the Sphinx as the most sacred beast in all Egypt did he wake up and enquire where the beast came from. We thought he was making a stupendously silly joke, but his face was perfectly serious and displayed an almost anxious curiosity.

"Sphinx!" said the lady from Krostewitz. "You know, that stone thing they're digging up at Gizeh."

"Digging up?" His face was eager again. Was it possible that the man had never heard of the Sphinx? The lady from Krostewitz looked at me, as much as to say: "What an oaf!"

The sphinx at Gizeh, observed Joshua Dohn, is an Egyptian monument of the time of Chefren.

"Oh, really?" said Dr. Aller, rubbing his fingers. He has a curious habit of rubbing his fingers and blinking at the same time, which reminds me of a man I knew—also a Cologne man, by the way—who came from the Verdun front into the Café Josty and had lost his hearing. Aller sits there just as he did. If you touch him he comes to life at once and immediately starts off about trachoma or bilharzia, as if he had just been talking about it when somebody interrupted him. The man at Josty's was just the same. Meyerhof has been fighting trachoma, the eye plague, for a generation. Ninety per cent of the children are infected.

"You don't say so!" said the lady from Krostewitz; and wanted to know if it was dangerous.

Dr. Aller blinked. First it attacks the conjunctiva, then the

cornea gets spotty, and then it's all up. It hasn't got much to do with the climate. Dirt is the chief trouble; and only hospital-treatment is much good there. If you leave the *schweinigel* at home—which means, in the street—you're worse off than when you started.

The lady from Krostewitz objected to the dirt on the first day. Did we remember what she'd said? Her instinct made her feel it at once. Her instinct is very susceptible that way; we now had a proof of it.

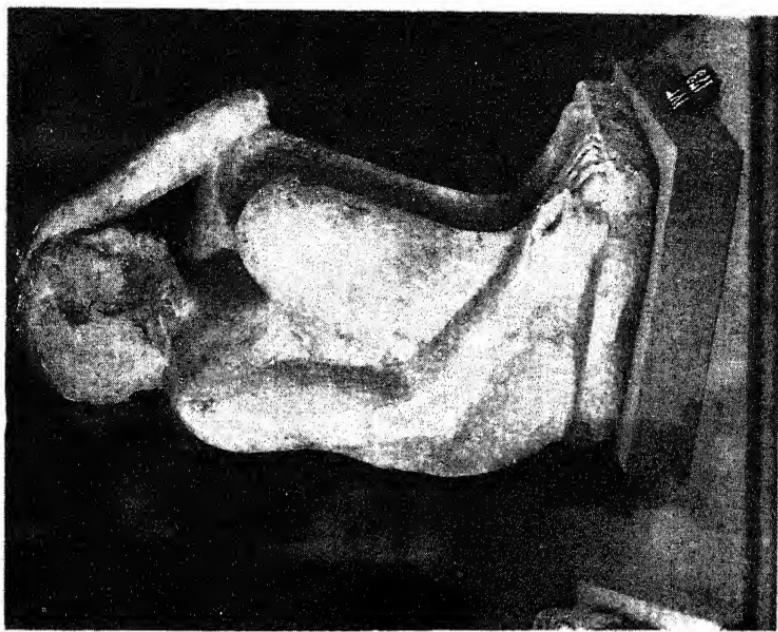
"You ought to know something about Egyptian syphilis," said Dr. Aller, rubbing his fingers. "I don't mean common or garden syphilis which you relieve with a little ointment and a couple of injections; no, poor brutes!"

"Oh!" said Joshua Dohn, raising his eyebrows; and even the priest at the end of the table held up his paw to silence him.

"Particularly the hereditary sort," Dr. Aller went on. "The *schweinigel* think nothing of it. The hereditary disease is as common with them as the primary is with us. The disease is no longer spread in the usual way. Imagine—grandmother, mother, and child. Now you must picture to yourselves the tertiary conditions for a moment."

The lady from Krostewitz pictured these conditions so well that she felt obliged to leave the room. Her husband, the hippo-collector with rosy cheeks, followed her.

Dr. Aller fidgetted and blinked his red eyelids. The connection between the flight of the Krostewitzers and his own announcements escaped him. Joshua Dohn opened his mouth several times, but shut it again without saying anything. Mixed feelings overcame him, and Aller got on to bilharzia. Even if you got rid of everything else there would still be bilharzia, the bladder-worm. You get it by paddling barefoot in the Nile. It eats into the flesh, works its way through the tissues into sensitive places and gnaws at sixty per cent of the population. There are filtering-stations in



A Servant Girl. (Limestone)



A Scribe. V Dynasty.



Door Piece. V Dynasty.

Cairo and one or two other big places. The *schweinigel* don't care for filtered water, however; they find it lacks pep, and whenever they get a chance they go down to the Nile with their black asses' skins. It's a frightful job to teach them not to do it. They understand the Nile! Besides, you can't pipe water to every hut.

Finally he added a little appendix on the vogue for cocaine and morphia, a passion of morbid frequency. It finished off what the other plagues had left. The smuggling in this stuff was something gigantic.

The Cologne doctor had lived with people, had to get away but wasn't yet free. My acquaintance at Josty's used to cut out comic faces to distract his mind from the thunder of gunfire and sat there without utterance. Dr. Aller had to deal with an unnaturally noiseless process. It slid, crept, glided along; and he had to talk in order to drown the quiet. Often you would have said he wasn't talking to our company at all, with Joshua Dohn at its head, but to people under the table. The Cologne dialect makes sentimentality impossible. And the *schweinigel* didn't take it too tragically either, but died like flies and multiplied even quicker. The population has more than doubled in the last thirty years, but there's no guaranteeing its quality.

Dettenberg considered on the other hand that people who multiply so in spite of bad conditions are capable of doing without the English and wanted to hand over bilharzia and company to Zaghlul whom he visualizes as the savior of Egypt. Dr. Aller disclaimed all knowledge of politics and hadn't yet formed any opinion about Zaghlul. Nor did he know anything about the Cairo museum, and when Joshua Dohn mentioned the importance of Zoser he asked if he was a doctor. He was quite unmoved when we told him that he was one of the better sort. A living doctor, to his mind, was better for the *schweinigel* than a dead king.

Our Egyptians are as obscure to him as his bilharzia is to us. I wanted to find the temple of Cheops and he the trachoma-bacillus.

If we had the trachoma-germ the cure could be better handled, although a little problem would always remain.

"It's a shame!" said Babuschka all of a sudden in one of her spontaneous moods, forgetting where she was and that nobody knew what she meant. Dr. Aller was explaining to Dettenberg about ankylostoma, the worm in the bowels. Sixty per cent, you must put it down for that.

I found Babuschka at Meyerhof's, asking him questions. He confirmed Aller's statements and showed her a sixteenth century Arab lantern. The form was still older. In Alexandria there was one from the tomb of the prophets. Trachoma was curable if you attacked it in time. Often you had to remove the eye in order to save the patient.

We told Dr. Aller about Rockefeller's ten millions and the possibility that the State would refuse them. If the man doesn't push off at once, he'll go crazy. His scheme for fighting bilharzia would cost a hundred million dollars, according to him, if you tried it on a small scale first; but once you had got ten millions the rest would find themselves. You would have to devote part to the preparation of films, which would afterwards be of educational use in Egypt. No hut without a bilharzia-film. Only pictures tell a story properly, as Rockefeller himself would see. I must go with him to Rockefeller. He himself doesn't want a penny of the money, not even the price of the fare. He will submit the exact details to me as soon as possible.

Dettenberg has another plan. Rockefeller must give Zaghlul the ten millions, for he is the only man who knows what the country wants. Above all Egypt must be freed of the English. Ten millions won't cover that, of course, but they would make a nice little contribution towards expenses. England is responsible for the whole mischief and no regulations will do any good until this canker is dispelled.

Aller is a tiresome person. Although I never encouraged him at

all he goes on as if the ten millions for his experiments were already in his pocket, and now there's this business of Dettenberg's on top of it. It was as impenetrable to him as the Sphinx and the dead king. His tendency to cling to easy ideas worked feverishly to dispose of the new foreign bodies. He rubbed his hands and blinked his eyelids. Dettenberg elaborated his attacks on England and exercised his nationalistic impulses unrestrained by any social instinct. Aller didn't know much about the English. As to syphilis the soldiers in the garrison counted only as consumers and in a race with greater powers of natural resistance reënforced by military drill the percentage remained insignificant. English doctors were weak at diagnosis and better at prescriptions. One had called trachoma a vascular disease. They drank too much, but were otherwise decent chaps.

You might have interpreted Aller's disinclination for political problems as anarchist dialectic making fun of the bourgeois; but nothing would have been wider of the mark. The *ceterum censeo* of the Anglophobe shattered his amiable remoteness. How could the expulsion of the English help in the fight against bilharzia? He asked in all honesty.

That, said Dettenberg, must be left to the Egyptians to decide. Aller opened his blazing eyes: "Those *schweinigel*?"

These superficial terms were not of the slightest assistance, rejoined Dettenberg with dignity.

Very well: Aller confirmed it with all possible decision. There was a tendency to septic conditions inherent in their blood, which made the whole business harder. In the south it was incomparably easier; the Sudanese can be turned into excellent hospital-orderlies.

Dettenberg objected to the one-sided tone of the discussion. It wasn't only a question of sick and healthy. It would be more estimable to distinguish them as free men or slaves. Ninety per cent of the population backed Zaghlul.

Joshua Dohn confirmed the popularity of the tribune, but his

notions left much to be desired. In a discourse on the Egyptian mysteries he had made some unpleasant remarks: a demagogue, he feared.

In the afternoon I found Aller and our priest on the school-porch. The paw was waving. The value of science was so little questioned by the accredited servants of the church that Catholic zeal must claim credit for the first illuminating interpretations of early history. God did not approve of lazy people who lost themselves in idle wonder, and no small concentration of all our spiritual powers was needed to forge sufficient weapons against those frightful scourges of the Egyptian people. He would not think it extravagant, however, to earmark some of Rockefeller's millions for the universally neglected missionary enterprises in Upper Egypt.

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## THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

WE have Erman's History of Literature in our book-box. It contains the *Exhortations of a Prophet* and the *Contest of the Weary Man with his own Soul*, two remarkable papyrus documents from a dark period. When the sixth dynasty came to an end about 2300, a tornado must have broken over Upper Egypt and wellnigh destroyed the land. The peaceful background behind the statues of the early kings and the quiet limestone groups, which permit us to imagine an ideal of domesticity, was suddenly shattered and replaced by a very different setting which also appeals to the experienced European. Suddenly the king's divinity ceases. His images are broken and his temples are laid low. Respect for antiquity is reversed; the marvelous order that seemed to need no bridle is turned upside down, and the golden age is over. The prophet and the weary man do not bemoan an enemy who has burst in from without to hold the land in subjection. That would not have surprised us; for the quiet reliefs, so unconcerned with military precautions, might have led us to expect it. The catastrophe surpasses all uncertainty. The enemy came from within; the tornado was social.

Egypt has anticipated us in everything, even revolutions; and this one no doubt was fraught with all the usual consequences. The numerous details in both writings indicate the tremendous collapse

of the social structure, particularly the earlier distinction between rich and poor. An allusion to the French Revolution would be misleading; the tornado raged against not one but all existing institutions. It seems as if we must imagine a sort of red terror like that which ushered in the Bolshevik regime. Not only special rights were cancelled, but every right; there were no more laws. Rape and plunder prevailed; the rich went begging and the poor lay on silken pillows. "The men of yesterday" were no more. Enemies had crept in and arrogance reigned supreme. Brother against brother, father against son; murder was on every hand and the Nile flowed with blood.

Many mutilations of earlier statues date from this period; from their desolate look we can imagine the frenzy of the revolutionary. No image of the old order must remain. The tornado must have been an orgy of destruction, and can hardly be explained as an emancipation of the great noble families from the power of the king—the usual account of the movement accepted by authority. It throws a shadow over the past.

The long spaces of time with which we reckon Egyptian history incline us to make out that the national temper was equable, an idea which is supported by the indolence of the present population. The tone of early Egyptian art contradicts it; the driving power which produced the masterpieces of the Old Kingdom must have been of an exceptional order. No art that rises above mere ornament thrives on a slow pulse; and the saying that associates repose with the Muses cannot be called profound. Naturally work stops when the workshop is set on fire; but the repose of the works which date from the early dynasties do not point to any lethargy of the instincts. Art is transformation. People who dream of a golden age never have it, could not have it even if such paradisaic circumstances were credible on earth. To evoke such an idea, obstacles must keep the creator on the move. I do not say: bad luck to him! The creator is always lucky. But he must be firmly in touch

with the relative to be able to turn it into the absolute. Movement and emotion go with it—movement which keeps watch, steals the senses and sinews, and goads on the easily wounded sensibility. In early Egyptian art humanity reacted to every nuance of the sensitive life and was thus perilous and imperilled. We cannot imagine it otherwise if we take it all in all. How could that art touch our most secret emotions unless germs of our uncertain conditions were bound up with its creative powers? The one—alas, or thank God!—goes with the other. Much more surprising than this revolution, of which we know little and can only divine from its attendant circumstances, is the art about which we can know everything. If the spirituality and independence we ascribe to Egyptian art is a real fact and not a meaningless phrase, we must take into consideration the possibility of revolution and its inevitable assumptions.

The hour of trouble and trial passed by. After a while—how long we cannot be sure—peace returned. Several dynasties came and went in three restless centuries and were hard put to it to hold up their heads. With the eleventh begins the so-called Middle Kingdom, and in the twelfth the security of the Old Kingdom is approximately restored. The second flowering of art sets in. Of the intervening period we know little. Reflections of barbaric conditions are plainly traceable in the burnt clay statue of a seated king, painted black with a red crown and a white robe, in the corridor at the museum. It is a robust figure without proportions, representing a king of the eleventh dynasty. It has no longer any of the old nobility and as yet none of the new.

The art of this kingdom that rose from the ruins of the Old Kingdom is a rebirth. A certain number of masterpieces have been placed, or rather pitchforked, into the third room. They deserve a better fate. Ten lifesize seated figures of Sesostris I. surround a somewhat desolate funeral vault of the same period; they resemble each other very closely. The desire to rival the old seated figures is unmistakable, and indeed successful, so far as their academic eclec-

ticism will permit. But their calculating look dispels the old enchantment, and they are not truly statuesque; their bodies have no compelling weight. You take them for husks of statues and forget that they are made of stone. The cold white of the almost unpainted limestone strengthens this impression. Here, where the sculptor has to some extent failed, you miss the completing hand of the painter; color would have added movement, or at least a semblance of movement. In no detail can they bear comparison with earlier works. The ears are not organic growths, but ornamental shells, conceived in line like the graceful decoration on the flat side of the throne. Everything is nice and neat, in the academic taste. Some one I know said the other day that we should linger over these if the old things didn't exist. Possibly: I don't know. They would still have charm; even two thousand years later Egyptian sculpture has at times an undeniable charm. The most commonplace Italian ditty of the eighteenth century—or even of the nineteenth—is pleasant to the ear; and even belated survivals of Watteau's school have something of his light fantastic color. Without the top notes, however, art would be a mere dance without spiritual import. We sacrifice too much sensibility to substitutes which are "almost as good" and endure the routine of the successor out of respect for the predecessor. The old people were never academic. That is remarkable enough, since there appear to have been many inducements towards academic naturalism, if not towards academic stylization. The human being is always submerged in the sculptor; there are not many works so distinctive as the Zoser. The great Mykerinos is much more a craftsman's job, and so too, I think, is the Chefren. But the difference lies chiefly in the hardness of the material and is concerned with the smoothness of the detail; it hardly touches the main question—the feeling for solidity. Perhaps the Old Kingdom had merely a better academic tradition; it all comes to the same thing in the end.

The six pillar-statues with crossed arms, representing the same

Sesostris as Osiris, along the two main walls of the same room, are far more to our taste; and one sees why immediately. The costume of Osiris helps to enclose them, and the use of the pillar-figures as architectural accessories practically turns them into reliefs. The decorative replaces the static. Their architectural function has still the freshness of an unhackneyed device and the fluency of the line compensates for the lack of plastic amplitude. But the lack is there right enough.

The expansion of the Middle Kingdom into the realm of ornament became the regular mode of escape open to the survivors of a great tradition in every period, and here displayed for the first time the perils of the smooth and easy way. Its renaissance provided every facility in this direction. It was assisted by the pious caution with which the advance took place, and the virtuous resolve to neglect no opportunity of taking deeper root. There were artists who resisted this dangerous temptation and refused to be enslaved by architecture: indeed their number was considerable, for the manifold activities of the age insured it. They gained in surface-extent what they lost in depth. Miniature sculpture flourished; the cases in the third room are full of attractive specimens. This is the moment when the *bibelot* was invented: the product of a taste which aimed at largeness of style even in small matters and understood the secret properties of materials. The artist extended the boundaries of his originality and discovered the connoisseur. If all these miniature sculptures in every sort of material also served the cult of the dead, one imagines the tomb must have been a positive show-case. Works on a larger scale which can hold their own beside the older things are unknown to me.

The seated Amenemhet III., in sandstone, opposite the dark priest in the corridor, has a certain charm: an agreeable young man, upon whom your eye rests willingly enough, without paying much attention. He is the kind of man who adorns a drawing-room, moves faultlessly and never says anything tactless. There is

something well-turned-out in his nakedness; yet there is nothing that encourages you to attempt more intimate relations with him. If you did, your partiality would hardly survive the test; and one day you would discover some trivial detail—a malformed ear, for instance—that you could never get over as long as you lived and that would prevent your ever asking him to the house again. The Middle Kingdom discovered the middle course, an eminently practicable social style. Its mentality is comparable with that of the Quattrocento. You seldom take the things very seriously and they get smaller in the mind's eye. The lifesize Queen Nefret in the corridor, with her ringlets, has all the attractiveness of miniature sculpture. Her statues would be still prettier if you put them in show-cases. Even the great granite sphinxes are nice and manageable; the only thing you must not do is to think of the Sphinx of Gizeh.

In modifying current artistic usages they displayed some inventiveness. Besides miniature sculpture, which led to a class by itself, colossal sculpture enjoyed a great vogue. As early as Sesostris I. they started giving royal statues an importance which had never been theirs before; and this increase in scale had widespread consequences. Two of these gigantic versions of the first Sesostris stand in the vestibule of the museum; they are like the pillar-figures in the third room, only much larger. One is in granite, and the other is painted limestone; they are stylized forms that cry out for the architecture for which they were destined. This agreeable relation with architecture was the decisive step which threatened the independence of sculpture. We know the importance of the diorite statues in the gateway of Chefren. Their dignity was not dependent on any closer connection with the building. They sat like gods in their granite house, and the smooth blocks echoed their exaltation. Only the complete abstraction of art symbolized the holiness of the king. The innovations testify eloquently, as only recognized facts may, to the change in the autocracy. In the Middle Kingdom the

kings ruled well or ill, conquered, repressed, delivered, possessed great power, caused themselves to be worshipped; but that spontaneous dignity and sanctity never returned. They clothed themselves in this or that title; the hieroglyphs grew longer and longer. Architecture and sculpture combined with every sort of decorative activity to do them honor; and thus the king himself learned the art of becoming decorative.

The two colossal statues of Sesostris show the king as Osiris and are therefore clothed once more. This dress was as ritual as the mantle of Chasechem and Zoser, the so-called festal mantle. It is no accident that the most brilliant period of the Old Kingdom has left us so many statues of kings either naked or wearing only the apron, whereas in the Middle Kingdom the Osiris-statue takes the upper hand. It was characteristic of this art to use raiment as a means towards the creation of a style; they were far too intelligent not to be aware of their weak points, and the cult afforded them an adequate means of escape. A new scheme was discovered: the crouching figure, whose whole body from the neck to the tips of the toes was hidden in a cubic mass of garments. This discovery, at once ingenious and radical, was acceptable to the cult, for the great plain clothed surfaces made room for countless hieroglyphs. It amounted practically to a coffining of the body.

Being now concerned merely with the head as it emerged from its wrappings, the artist was relieved of many difficulties, but forfeited the ultimate object of his representation. In this draped kneeling figure, which lasted down to the latest period, the authorities see a reflection of the geometry of the pyramid-builders; it seems to me much more like a convenient cubism diametrically opposed to the instincts of an earlier age. The great epoch of geometric building displays an extremely sharp distinction between building and sculpture. The best naked statues date from the same period as the pyramids. If the coffin-principle of the kneeling figure had been generalized and systematized, the whole art of Egypt

would soon have run to coffin-making. Fortunately that was not the case. The draped kneeling type is one of the many notions of the Middle Kingdom, typical of the cheapening of artistic inquiry in those days, but not universally applicable. Its happiest results are obtained on a small scale; in one of the cases in the third room there is a small kneeling figure in striped alabaster that I should like to pocket.

In the Middle Kingdom one's predatory instincts are often aroused. We don't often visit the upstairs rooms at the museum; but when we do, Babuschka makes straight for the light room where the jewelry is kept, and that keeps us fully occupied, as a rule, for the rest of the morning. The show-cases of the Middle Kingdom are very seductive. In times gone by they too had costly things of every sort: the famous gold head of Horus, from the sixth dynasty, for instance, and even in the first dynasty they wore gold and polished stones. Very soon came a taste for necklaces of gold and small colored plaques. Nefret had herself painted thus with an ornamental band in her hair. These simple but in no way crude objects are accessories, as far as we are concerned: our interest is not really aroused till we get to the Middle Kingdom. You try the things on in your imagination and forget where they came from thousands of years ago. The people who made them were specialists in female luxury and carried on a highly complicated craft. They had all the quips and cranks of the cosmetic art at their fingers' ends and gave themselves all the airs of a Parisienne born and bred. At this period they took to making chains of round polished semi-precious stones in numberless variety. Such were those of Princess Khnumuit, fashioned of tiny gold and turquoise-colored reels of hairbreadth fineness; while for high festivals there were heavy diadems inlaid with stones and almost baroque in their ornamental form. These inlays go into the smallest detail, like enamels, and their precision surpasses anything that ever came from Limoges. The Egyptians knew nothing of true enamel and

would not have relished it; it would have seemed too pictorial to their goldsmiths, whose rich palette is composed entirely of minute stones polished and shaped, one would say, under the microscope. The drawing is always perfectly sharp. Often, in the small "stomachers" and elsewhere you frequently find extremely complicated figure subjects in filigree work as well. The question we asked ourselves before the pyramids again arises, on a diminutive scale: how did they manage it with the means at their disposal?

That is not the chief point; for, as we know, the development of technical resources has never done craftsmanship any good—has rather proved its undoing. Here, as everywhere, material restrictions provide precisely the springboard from which they take off to achieve perfection. The astonishing thing really is this need for display, this emotion behind the things, the mobility of an instinct which is still active in many of our desires today. The style of the large diadem and similar pieces, an abstract baroque ornament, holds its ground but its influence is not everywhere decisive. Princess Khnumuit was not particularly addicted to it; and this personal freedom of give and take is just what anticipates our own habits. The prettiest headdress is a loose net of gold filigree threads set with tiny blue and red star-shaped flowers. Six larger stars, also in color on gold, separate the network at equal intervals. The crosses are familiar from early Christian art, but prettier; one must remember for a moment that Christianity came later. You can see the gay little head under this open crown. In the Nineties Lalique made just such another net for a fair friend who had all Paris at her feet. The taste of the Egyptians was more exacting. This crown is hardly a trinket; it seems rather to be a spontaneous notion that came into the artist's head one fine day, and has nothing to do with the taste of the moment. He might have been a painter who turned jeweler for the nonce. Its unpretentious air is very much to our taste; it seems to have no "style" and is therefore in

our own vein. No "style," but a personal charm, a happy accident of greater worth than any costly display.

The baroque comes next; but it has none of the autocratic force of the real baroque. You might almost say that it shared our cherished liberty to play with easy rhythms and pass over into the imponderable. You can see the delicate stuffs these women wore, draped not in a baroque but rather in a Directoire fashion, leaving the limbs their full freedom; you can see the little chairs, with their straight lines, and the low stools in rare woods, with ivory feet or claws of neatly carved wood, and the gently curving day-beds in their boudoirs. You can complete their furniture from their pictures and the actual remains, improbable as it may seem: unmistakably Empire, purged of all imperial feeling, discreet and bourgeois. Napoleon was not here for nothing, though his borrowings touch only the outlines and the change is the significant thing.

This Middle Kingdom too has something of ourselves and the signs increase and the dream-relation that binds us to our "Family" becomes almost tangible; you can very nearly establish ethnographical contacts. With all allowances made it is hardly an exaggeration to compare this kingdom that arose out of a revolution with our own nineteenth century. No serious distortion of our instincts nor any very violent disciplining of our own preferences is required of us; we have merely to modify the form, to our own disadvantage. The Middle Kingdom listened to the intellect; it was a strenuous, highly animated and eclectic age. Its taste reflects its perilous adventures, and a highly developed craftsmanship concealed its shallowness. We have compared the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the two epochs and noticed the same change. The monumentality of the old gravestones has completely vanished. The hawk and the other symbols on a stone of the early dynasties were the counterparts of the Horus behind the head of Chefren. The people who carved it in stone had seen the sacred bird and the mystery guided their hand. The enlightened children of the revolution have lost

their faith in the gods, but they recognized the beauty of the old ardor and their own enthusiasm was kindled.

In the hall of the museum is the tip of a pyramid dating from the Middle Kingdom; it belonged to the pyramid of the third Amenemhet, I believe. The bibliophile is all agog. The ornamental script is disposed with consummate delicacy on the black granite triangle: not too much and not too little, an ideal title-page. A new typographer joins William Morris, Ricketts and E. R. Weiss from the nineteenth century before Christ. The texts on the obelisks are just as good. Incidentally, the obelisk is an invention of the Middle Kingdom, and this sun-pencil carries on the geometry of earlier ages. The elegant, somewhat lonely product of this development is characteristic; if you wanted to symbolize the creative instincts of the Old and the Middle Kingdoms in an easily grasped formula you might well compare the pyramid and the obelisk.

In the Middle Kingdom taste and technical ability reign supreme; and the restful certainty of this level of achievement invites comparison with our own period. We must balance every tiny success against a heap of failure and derive our instant of delight from passing pleasures. Only when we admit to ourselves that few of us are ever right do we recognize similar symptoms in the Middle Kingdom. It would be wrong to assume that a more or less eclectic taste had it all its own way. Alongside the many skillful purveyors of luxury there were men with incomparably higher aspirations; this is probably true of builders, and certainly true of sculptors. They loved the old things, but their life was not drawn from them only; they aimed at spiritual progress along paths laid out by enthusiasm and creative will. Once again these men emphatically confirm the remarkable parallel between their age and ours.

We know little about them; which is natural, for these anonymous people who once had names disappear in the mass, from which, moreover, they were never differentiated by the isolation that distinguishes our masters. For long stretches they went hand in



Head of Sesostris III. Middle Kingdom.

watched and forced the visual impression upon the clay. Granite turns to wax, it seems, under the master's hand, yet remains a hard stone. Analysis results in a synthesis as hard as rock.

There is something of Rodin in the modeling: the Rodin of the noblest portraits, not of the Balzac, the Rodin who left Donatello with his outline and who filled the outline with nervous force. The Sesosiris head is greater, for the artist relied less on nerves alone; he thought in stone. When we use stone, we cannot get beyond simple reproduction; curiously enough, the comparison with Rodin does not detract from the Sesosiris, for the thought bridges them naturally. It is not so firm a plank as that which united our "family" with Corot, though it comes closer to us.

There are many good heads dating from the Middle Kingdom, and not only in the Cairo museum. I remember an equally expressive obsidian head. They did not often reach such heights, but even the transitional things captivate us. So much at this period is transitional. In the corridor there is a fragment of a colossal granite statue, here oddly ascribed to the third dynasty, though actually dating from the Middle Kingdom at the earliest; it is a mighty head adorned with every sort of emblem, and set on mighty shoulders. Its expressiveness triumphs over the trophy-like splendor of ornament.

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## THE MOKATTAM

WHEN I referred to it as a mountain in conversation with a Swiss the other day, he smiled, for the Mokattam is not much more than a hundred meters high. No Swiss can realize that the beauty of a mountain has as little to do with its height as the taste of a liver-sausage with its cubic contents, and that Cairo would suffer appreciably if the Mokattam were even so much as half as high as the Rigi. Only cigars dare be oversized. The Mokattam is a human mountain and belongs to the city. It is the back of the chair on which Cairo is seated; it fits the Nile and its islands and the sea of houses, and the pyramids in the distance might be its outposts. Similar heights accompany the whole valley far down into the South, and the proximity of this scenery has doubtless had as much share in the shaping of the Egyptian formal sense as Paris and the Seine have contributed to French art or Venice and the lagoons to the school of Titian. The mountains are the place where brigandage and gluttony and boundless metaphysics thrive. In any case the Mokattam is high enough even to satisfy those climbers who must feel that their necks are endangered, as you will see by what follows.

At the very beginning we had learned to know it, during the growth of our passion for the pyramids and when we discovered that in the old days they had got the materials for the pyramids

here. I fancy it was our first Sunday in Egypt. Old Rennebaum took us to the quarries. Inside the mountain where the rock was softest, and therefore most highly prized, the Egyptian hollowed out the stone; and hall-like rock-chambers of great extent came into being. Pillars were left standing to support the mass of stone, and round the pillars arch-shaped projections jutted out into space. These half-natural buildings have a fantastic swing about them; there is greatness in everything that the pyramid people touched. You can still see the beginnings of parallel workings, as though cut in butter, and the holes in which they put their lamps while they were at work. Afterwards you get a dazzling view of Cairo; at the most exquisite moment old Rennebaum declared that the world war was a monstrous shame from our point of view, and that if we hadn't been stabbed in the back we should have done them all in.

We had often planned to repeat the expedition; but as old Rennebaum, who was an architect according to his own account, had buildings to look after, Dettenberg, the national economist, who had also been there and who professed to know the Mokattam like the inside of his own pocket, promised to be our guide. We must come to Meadi first, however, as he had to lunch there. From there he could show us a capital path. We were then going over the Citadel and I was more concerned with the Mokattam than with the way there, but I dare say he was right.

Meadi is a freshly-baked, oasis-like colony of villas to the south of Cairo, mainly inhabited by English people. The trees grow there visibly. At the far end there is a branch of our convent in a beautiful garden. Thence you cut across towards the high ground. In front of us, in the distance, lay the Citadel with the mosque of Mohammed-Ali. When you look at the mosques not as architecture but merely as silhouettes, there is nothing to be said against them. But you must not let yourself start wanting to look at their interiors; they are only fit to be seen from afar. In the distance the

sun plays brilliantly with their domes and minarets in a way it could never manage with our more solid buildings. No Gothic filigree, no baroque could achieve quite this lyric ease. The Arabs did not so much build their mosques as improvise them in the empty air, just as they touched in their poetry without too much concern for regular construction. Distance is always the main thing, and a well-chosen site in which the mosque may float like a banner. Near at hand the gaudiness gets on your nerves and the details shout at you. You must not think of solid walls but of trembling lights; Cairo is full of dancing.

Although the Mohammed-Ali belongs to our own day and was copied from an original at Constantinople, and is thus of small account among the learned, it is the loveliest of all. None has found a better site; it is the bouquet of the Mokattam. None the less it was a silly business, taking the train to Meidi to begin with, and then walking back for two hours; for half way there we were almost back in the city again and were still wandering about on level ground, and though we should be happy enough once we were up on top it was certainly too late for the quarries. Dettenberg went skipping away with his *innamorata* and had long since vanished, and we couldn't guess where to find the way up the steep wall of stone. One must trust to instinct, the nice bookseller thought; and Dettenberg's friend the engineer was positive that the path would soon appear, because somebody had once described it to him, though that was certainly some years ago. It appeared right enough; that is to say, not the real path, but a way up which would doubtless take us there; and a young native who knew the path went on ahead. It was real climbing, such as I hadn't practiced since my student days, and it told on one's knees, but it answered well enough. The engineer kept saying that the proper path was bound to appear soon, and the nice bookseller agreed. As he was a quiet, accurate man, who had succeeded in calling attention to German books in Cairo in quite a short space of time,

I believed him. We kept stopping to rest; half way up, the view rewarded our efforts. The Mohammed-Ali no longer stood, but swayed in the sun. Its two tall thin alabaster minarets glistened, and so did the sweat on my forehead.

When we reached the proper path it was unpleasant, for Babuschka would imagine that because I can't look at the street from our balcony in Berlin I must be suffering from dizziness, and began to get nervous about it and started talking about it covertly to the others, even—I think—to the nice bookseller. I didn't feel very secure, but that was largely because I was vexed with Babuschka. Even if you don't like looking from balconies down into the street the fact remains that you can put up with considerable discomforts in company. Social instincts play their part; alone I should have probably refused to tackle it. Besides, many's the time I have scrambled over the roof of a veranda at night to reach Klärchen's little porthole of a window, and once I even went up the Pilatus in the rack-railway, sitting by the window too; and there, as every one knows, you spend a good time swinging over an abyss. I managed it by talking hard to a man about Flaubert; we had had a longish correspondence on the subject and had finally made friends. In such situations everything depends on form and *tenue*. In seasickness it is exactly the same. On that occasion I know I talked very well about Flaubert, with a precision too often lacking in my conversation. In the same way I tried hard to formulate my thoughts distinctly as I climbed the Mokattam, though this well-meant concentration was also at times upset by Babuschka. We talked about rhythm; and I asserted its superiority over all other intellectual and moral emotions. The subject had its charm, but was hardly concrete enough for this occasion. In the middle ages the Copts had cut this path in the rock; in dread of the Mahometans they lived in caves, in which you still find traces of their worship; and they must have been as nimble as apes, for their stone steps are often scarcely wider than a medium-sized folio. On the

right you have the sun-warmed stone; and on the left the shimmering ether. The abstract nature of the conversation allowed me at times to wonder suddenly what would happen if you couldn't go any farther and felt compelled to turn back. I smiled at the idea; and Babuschka, who was climbing in front of me and kept looking round far too often, smiled too. The conversation stopped, as it does when crabs are being eaten. Only the engineer, our guide, kept assuring us at regular intervals that the worst was now over and that the rest would be quite easy. Whereupon Babuschka gave him a meaning look; she realized that the remark was purely rhythmic and meant nothing at all. Each time I was pleased and nodded to him, while I tried to indicate to Babuschka that she'd better stop grumbling.

Suddenly we heard the engineer's voice a long way off, as though he was sitting on the earth or on another mountain top. He had gone ahead with the young Berber and disappeared. We came to the place where the path broke off at a small hole in the rock. The opening was smaller than Klärchen's porthole. We had to get down through this hole, and the engineer had already done it. He stood a little way off, about two yards lower. The young Berber stood beside him, picking his nose.

"After this it's all quite easy!" the engineer shouted cheerfully. "We shall be up at the top in five minutes."

I lay on my stomach to inspect. The hole was not the worst part. Beyond it you had to let yourself down about a yard in order to get at a tiny foothold far smaller than a folio, which you naturally couldn't see while letting yourself down, but had to grope about for rhythmically. A couple of steps by the rocky wall brought you to apparently solid ground.

The nice bookseller went ahead, squeezed into the hole and emerged again. But he was smaller than I am, a head shorter at least, and could dispense with the stomach business. My girth made the first part of the process immeasurably harder, and lying on my

stomach I failed to get my body through the hole. Then I lay on my back and pushed slowly forward, waving my legs in the air, and started fishing about. Everybody laughed. Babuschka grumbled. She couldn't see how people could laugh here. I saw it quite well, and so I gave it up, paddled back and crouched in the hole. I prefer to remain here, I remarked with some decision. There was less question of giddiness when by lying on your back you ceased to be aware of the yawning chasm. Only a recollection of what my biographer might do made me decide that in case I fell, it would be a pity if my last moments were comic. My rhythm forbade it. You can't conceive how idiotic it feels to grope about for a folio with your feet through a porthole. I had a nasty taste in my mouth as if I'd been mixing my drinks.

"Go and leave me!" I said. "*Go away!*" I yelled at Babuschka, and at the same moment I felt the pitiableness of my situation. Besides, I should really have enjoyed being left alone.

Of course I crawled through in the end. One always does. Even if you look like a tadpole and know it—yes, even if you are condemned to spend the rest of your life in a tadpole-like condition, you crawl through. It was easier than I anticipated and hardly lasted a minute. Babuschka took the obstacle like a chamois.

Once clear, I turned indolently back and spat into the abyss. Stupidly enough, I'd left my monocle in the hole; instantly I expressed my desire to retrieve it. Babuschka was beside herself, and the nice bookseller pointed out to me the craziness of the undertaking. The difficulties redoubled. Apparently the Copts helped themselves along with iron brackets which have disappeared in the course of time. The remains of one such bracket were visible. Luckily Babuschka came upon my spare monocle. Sulkily I gave in.

The plateau of the Mokattam is extensive and at the end carries a ruined mosque. Rhythm returned. Finally Dettenberg came skipping up with his companion. They too had been in peril of their lives on several occasions and compared notes with us, which

heightened the rhythm. A cobra darted away into a crack in the rock. Our enthusiasm mounted. We were alone on the plateau and felt we were its masters. The outworks and caves on the slope lay below us. A spectrum was aflame over Cairo, and according to its own rhythm the great round red disc sank. In the distance the three great triangles stood out, like the tents of a general to guard him from the mist. When the cannon-shot at six gave the fasting people leave to eat, we could not refrain from doing the same, and divided up two oranges which I had in my pocket and which had remained comparatively intact.

At home in the evening we experienced an earthquake. Babuschka's framed pastels stood out from the walls for a moment like exaggeratedly stiff shirts in the wind. No disastrous consequences followed.

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## THE NEW KINGDOM

THE three flowering-seasons of Egypt occur in her long history like oases in the desert. Bald intervals of vast extent, unexplored and, in the absence of monuments, hardly explorable, surround luxuriant and thickly populated epochs. The three that have been excavated may have been the extreme limits of achievement, but certainly indicate the main waves. Each of the three has its own spiritual nature and its own culture; but the convenient distinctions which are available in our epoch do not here obtain. There is no Gothic to succeed a Romanesque age, no Baroque to follow a Gothic; religious conservatism maintained a strictly permanent style. The plastic forms created under the early dynasties constantly recur. Not only do specific individual traits remain, such as survive through our style as well, but each epoch clings with varying success to the entire formal apparatus of the golden age. Architecture alone shows actual advances, since its requirements alter; yet that too is concerned to preserve the severe traditional scheme. Sculpture changes its structure only once in special and quite conscious circumstances; it happened under Amenophis and did not last long. In the twentieth dynasty and even later they set to work as they had done in the Old Kingdom and remain comparatively unaffected by the development of experience. Just as only one river waters the land, so only one style runs through its art. Like the

Nile it bends many times and brings forward many new aspects, but throughout its whole course it is fundamentally the same. There is only one truly creative period: the first. Everything that follows is a renaissance. The first renaissance, that of the Middle Kingdom, may be described as a highly respectable activity which built many canals and enriched many fields to which insufficient attention had hitherto been paid. The diligent effort was rewarded by lucky accidents, but a remarkable level of achievement was not enough to conceal the weakening of the texture. The New Kingdom is the renaissance of a renaissance; and the disadvantages of the immediately preceding period are intensified. Architecture blocks the whole foreground with gigantic structures. Pillar-statues grow to a monstrous size, and the mass-production of colossal figures in the temples vulgarizes craftsmanship. Architecture, which for us is the mother of sculpture, seems in Egypt to have become its murderer. It is no thanks to architecture if anything survived; rather it shows the power of resistance of the original germ. Something did, as a fact, survive. For a surprisingly long time, Art held its own—with severe losses it is true—against the mass-drive of the New Kingdom.

The waxing and waning of this mighty empire is not simply an interesting phenomenon in ancient history, but actually affords a new point of comparison with our own destiny. The Middle Kingdom disintegrated and so perished; the differentiation affected the structure of the State, which led to a splitting up of its forces, and its whole culture. The Egypt of the twelfth dynasty always strikes me as a collection of perfectly legitimate instincts which, because they ruled without restraint, led only to a collapse. One might say that there were too many thinkers and poets and artists and amateurs and too few people with good tough bones. It was an artistic century. They devoted themselves to the perfection of the ego; and the refinement of the technique which they devoted to that end made their egotism a moral affair. Artists think about

everything except what is necessary. Kings and princes wrangled with each other for so long that the boundaries of the land collapsed, and then came the bitter conclusion which was this time only to be expected. The enemy broke in and made an end of their game. It is not yet certain how we should regard the Hyksos who overran the country in the first third of the seventeenth century b. c.; but it does not really matter much. In any case the foreign hordes are of less interest than the people they defeated, though they remained masters of Egypt for nearly a hundred years. The native king Ahmose, who climbed to the throne about 1580 b. c., was the first to cleanse the land, after a bloody conflict, and restore order. Ahmose founded the so-called eighteenth dynasty, far the most noteworthy in Egyptian history, since the whole people underwent a decisive change under that regime. Ahmose must have been a good general; he was the first ruler who led his host in person, a soldier king. The whole turn of affairs confirms it. What he needed was not ideas and tasteful trifles but a well-drilled army to drive the Hyksos back into Asia and quell the Nubian revolt. With his army the king finally subdued the old hereditary nobles and made himself sole ruler. It is not surprising that he refused to allow the means by which he achieved it to get out of his control. It was fundamental, and replaced the ideal elements of the Old Kingdom which had proved inadequate. The precautions taken by the head of the state maintained a thoroughly solid background. When it occurred to his underlings to doubt the grace of God, there were well-drilled soldiers ready to teach them better. The king in no wise neglected his divine halo: on the contrary. As soon as the eighteenth dynasty felt solid ground under its feet it started the greatest temple-building that the world has ever seen. Religion became one of the strongest publicity devices of the regime. The gigantic temples required a manifold array of priests; they supported the throne but they also had an eye to their own interests, and soon attained to the most powerful position in the State, in

which they began to play a highly political and, as inevitably happens, a disastrous rôle. At the height of the New Kingdom they formed merely a second flexible army in the autocrat's hand. An official hierarchy developed along strongly militaristic lines. The historians still persist in emphasizing the completely unwarlike original disposition of the ancient Egyptians and it is easy to trace it in their art. In the New Kingdom a change occurs. The lord shares with the people his greed for glory. The Egyptians give up dreaming and reckon with iron facts. The lust for expansion drags them from their comfortable home. They batten on the respect of their vanquished enemies, whom they continue to regard as barbarians, and revel in glory. Whether they sought to indulge this passion with native forces or mercenaries is of no concern to us. Urbane decorum turns into the swollen pride of Imperialism.

The Middle Kingdom was a refinement of the Old. The New is, on the whole, the opposite. Even this coarsening process has its lucky moments; in the fourth room at the museum there are plenty of crude but expressive works, such as the scribe Amenothes, son of Hapu, the much reproduced figure with the three parallel folds on his chest. This crudeness affects the architect too at times, but as in sculpture, so also in architecture: there are notable exceptions. The difference in quality between the New and the Old Kingdom is not under discussion; the eighteenth dynasty wavers between coarseness and an excessive refinement which at times far surpasses the tendencies of the Middle Kingdom, especially at the end of the eighteenth dynasty. About this moment an interesting episode occurs. We are in the first half of the fourteenth century B. C., when their warlike lusts had been satisfied, even sated, and a sensitive man came to the throne who longed for something more than martial glory and was sick of the vulgar display of publicity. Amenophis IV. set himself up as an apostle of truth. "Akhenaton, who lives by truth" was one of his titles. His truth was not incompatible with beauty, for he did away with polytheism and sacred

cattle, and identified himself with the one Aton, the sun, and was the first monotheist on earth. Since his novelty could find no setting in the ancient Thebes with its host of temples, he built his residence at El Amarna with the swiftness of wind. All his acts were like improvisations.

El Amarna was the only place we had experience of before we came here. Babuschka went mad over the finds in the Berlin museum: the graceful colored bust of the queen, still more the little head of Teje, and most of all the sculptor's studies; and like every lover of the arts in Berlin, I had long since kept on my writing-table a cast of the Amenophis head, which incidentally Borchardt now thinks is Tutchen. It didn't answer in the long run, as the plaster got dusty. There is no question about the things in Berlin being the pearls of El Amarna. They are still angry about it in Cairo, although everything has turned out for the best; it is really a matter for congratulation, for at least they have found a place worthy of them, where people can see them. In the magazine at Cairo they would be lost.

Cairo has, however, got the other head from El Amarna, of which you have scarcely any idea in Berlin, unless it is that you overlook it among the abundance of more beautiful and pleasant things: it is the very antithesis of grace and refinement. It requires a certain effort, for this antithesis is anything but pleasant. It positively twists your guts.

At the end of the corridor which runs past the four rooms stand two fragments of colossal statues of Amenophis which, apart from the marks of royal dignity and their dimensions, have almost nothing in common with earlier standing-figures, for their style departs from nature in the most wilful fashion. It is a baroque style, highly fantastic, yet familiar to us in spite of its extravagance; it lengthens and emaciates the faces, deprives them of their flesh, emphasizes the cheek-bones, slits the eyes, sharpens the lips and extracts a lively arabesque from the contour of the cheek between the chin and the

gigantic ear. The royal beard on the chin is of great length. The thin arms are crossed over a womanish breast. Below, an ornamental belly curves out between the womanish flanks. Under the slit-like navel a very curious apron, carved in the round, girds the skinny lower frame. It is a crazy mannerism, reminding one a little of Botticelli, except that the gentle Sandro's pictures are comparatively harmless. These effete faces make one think of a modern who was trying to convert Greco into sculptural form and got out of his depth. The style results in a grotesque caricature, but remains thoroughly consistent. When we remember the most recent artistic products of our own period it helps us to dismiss any idea of perverse distortion. Incidentally such high treason would have led them not to the temple of Karnak, where these statues stood, but somewhere else altogether. What we have before us is officially authorized expressionism.

These are the early works of the Amenophis period; the reliefs from El Amarna in the fourth room go much further. The king appears with a skull which outdistances every exotic macrocephalous freak. It is as though the whole gigantic royal headdress had turned into his head, and this head runs forward into a great long nose. The neck is like a retort. The outstretched arms, spindles with sacrificial vessels in the hands, are of quite different lengths and are attached not to the shoulders but to the retort. A frankly womanish breast seems confined within a corset and prolongs itself into the indescribable paunch. Oh, this paunch! Oh, that behind! The royal sit-upon occurs where other mortals have their backs, and with the paunch it forms a bulbous figure symmetrical in front and behind. The backside is not semicircular as usual, but somewhat like a trembling wave on which you could play a flute but not sit. The figure stands on thin little legs without joints, and with club-feet appended. The royal family has the same anatomical peculiarities.

Even these creations, whose involuntary absurdity would hardly

be passed by the most independent of exhibitions in Paris or elsewhere, are treated by Egyptologists as works of high art, and no amount of change of manner invites them to make a qualitative comparison with earlier masterpieces. People enjoy the faithful intimacy of their reflections of family-life and overlook the trifling fact that though these royal personages may chat together and bask in the friendly rays of constant sunshine, they are not human beings at all. According to one theory the curious malformation is really a true reproduction of the form of Amenophis as nature made him. The honesty of the apostle of truth would not have tolerated any slurring over of bodily defects. In this context we may point for confirmation to curious miniature sculptures which do represent actual natural phenomena. One of the liveliest products of this kind is the small relic in the fourth room of a Princess of Punt, a dwarf with corkscrew limbs who amused the witty Queen Hatshepsut. The dealer Nahman in Cairo has a whole collection of these figures. With the help of the doctors they have determined the disease of poor Amenophis, a complicated name which I have forgotten. His wife and children and the whole court, and indeed all his underlings as well, must, then, have suffered from the same disease. This surpasses the legendary astigmatism of Greco. Perhaps Egyptologists labor under the same burden.

Everything has already come to pass beneath the rays of Aton and everything recurs once more, even princes who play strange tricks with art instead of ruling. Egypt has no call to rejoice over this Akhenaton, who forgot the enemies outside in his passion for style, and let the country go to rack and ruin. He brought the eighteenth dynasty to an end, for only half-wits followed him on the throne. His son-in-law Tutankhamen was one of the last. Naturally the indignant priests made all speed to restore the gods Amenophis had cast down and he was persecuted.

He was no Luther; and only a profane cynicism could think of turning him into a Christ. Objects for comparison lie nearer to

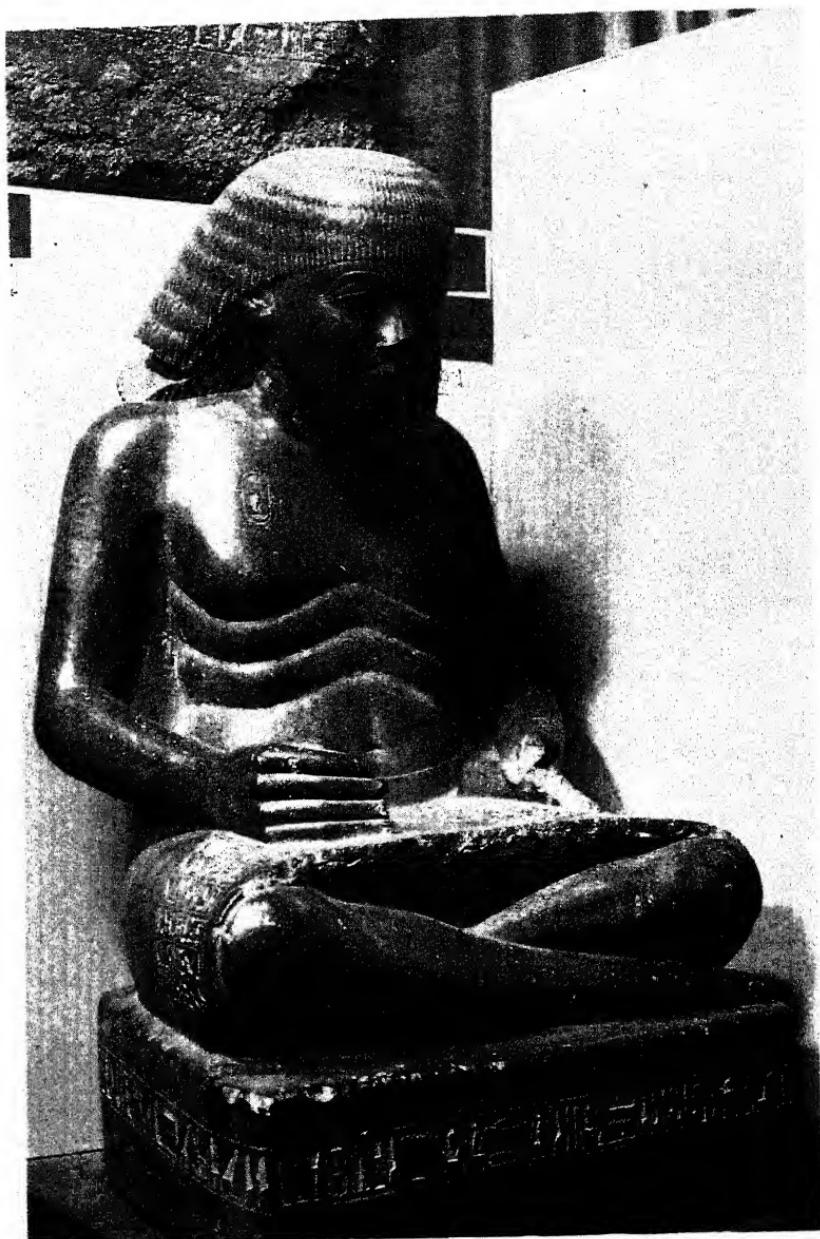
hand. The experiment resembles those playful quirks which characterize the artistic activities of our own day, though it contains a certain legitimate residue. The interesting aspect, to my mind, is his literary and artistic dilettantism. He celebrated the sun in poems which, if not among the peaks of the world's literature, are pretty enough; and his quickly built residence reminds us of Weimar, except that the Weimar of Karl August seems more old-fashioned and sedate. El Amarna is more like the Darmstadt of twenty years ago, when the young Grand Duke, for lack of something better to do, decided to patronize the arts and crafts. He summoned many artists; and they brought plenty of artistic notions with them, and built and carved and painted away until they had turned Darmstadt into Darm-Athens.

The symbolism of the helmet-skull and bulbous paunch cast a shadow over the little land, and the cheerful discoverer of the sun caused a flutter in official circles. Eminent court-dignitaries found themselves obliged to imitate the gestures of the artists, who now ruled the roost in place of soldiers or priests; and many an honest fist was clenched in private. Amenophis was more original and sat in the center of it all. Perhaps he set it in motion himself and was not merely carried along passively; he too, however, was content with a façade and lived his life in an artistic milieu. His reformation was *art nouveau*.

We do not know what deeper influences the sun-cult may have had, apart from its mischievous consequences for the kingdom. Its effects on art are more evident. Among the artists were people of genius who refused to pander to the bulbous style, or only adopted it on festive occasions, and the king took a liberal and indulgent view of them. In the studio of the sculptor called Thutmosis they have found studies of startling vividness which have something of the Rodinesque quality of the great portraitists of the Middle Kingdom, and which are very much to our taste; and in the ominous El Amarna case in the Cairo museum you can also find female torsos of Hellenic beauty. The court-style did not achieve the



Thutmose III. New Kingdom.



Amenophes, Son of Hapu. XVIII Dynasty. New Kingdom.

final organization of error; and the exceptions allow us to look behind these outcrops and admire the ancient constantly renewed source. Many of the portraits of Tutankhamen even display, for all their decadence, the sensitive flexibility of the artists of El Amarna.

The nineteenth dynasty promptly restored the world power which had crumbled away under the sun-king, and on the whole does not show much signs of sensibility. Impressiveness at all costs is the order of the day; and we are treated to an orgy of colossal sculpture. These are the things for which the Cairo Museum was built; they look well enough in the bank-building. The worst, by the way, are not the creations of Rameses, but date from the Middle Kingdom, like the two in the vestibule which greet the visitor on his arrival. It cannot have been easy to find such pedestrian things in the Middle Kingdom. Rameses has "usurped" them: that is, carved his name on them. It is one of the easy-going habits of these later kings to appropriate in this simple fashion the statues of their predecessors. Rameses II. in particular was a persistent exponent of this practice; in his old age he must have suffered from a morbid hunger for stone, for he took indiscriminately whatever came to hand. Taken as a whole, it was heterogeneous enough. The two colossi of the king, right by the vestibule, are made of a fine brown stone and their effect is not so bad. Rameses appears as the god Ptah. These divine dresses are the counterparts of the various regimental uniforms affected by modern monarchs. The Ptah-outfit is particularly becoming. Without a crown, and wearing only a close-fitting piece of material on his head, Rameses stands in a compact attitude with both hands resting on his gigantic scepter. The natural marking of the brown stone paints long folds on the narrow garment and decorates it in a masterly fashion; a more elegant presentation is hardly to be imagined.

There are also representations of a much higher order. Nearly thirty years ago I saw the great basalt Rameses at Turin and I remember with what enthusiasm I determined to visit Egypt that very same year. This Rameses seemed to me then a pinnacle of

achievement. We were in Turin, attending an international exhibition of arts and crafts, prepared for quite other impressions. The greatness of this stone had nothing to do with its mass effect; it was due to a mysterious grace. Under the fine-ribbed garment you felt a young body of all-conquering charm. The charm surmounted the format, and the stone surmounted its Egyptianness. A youth, delicate and appealing, smiled proudly and confidently, smiled with the elegance of one who is complete master of the situation, to whom nothing in his own time, and even in the twentieth century, is unfamiliar: an urbane smile. Afterwards I went on to Florence and Rome. Rameses kept me company all the way, and his smile kept at bay the usual intoxication of the Quattrocento and Cinquecento and exhorted me to aim at higher things. That was my first intimation: an incomprehensible survival of artistic power. In the maddest vortex of megalomaniac world-power, race always tells and wipes out everything proletarian.

Nearly a thousand years later the pride of Berlin—the “Green Head”—came into existence, after the conquest of the kingdom by Alexander the Great, when the Ptolemies were enthroned in Egypt. Entranced by this chiselled, polished, accurate objectiveness, you might ask whether the epoch that made such a work can be called decadent. In this tiny green slate head Egypt once more gathers up a brilliant heritage. Not only is it akin to the Rameses in Turin; you also fancy you can detect an echo of the earliest dynasties. However much we may insist that the progress in representational skill displayed in this little sculpture is an inadequate substitute for statuesque grandeur, naturalism is still restrained by the fundamental Egyptian instinct for the volume of the head. Certain authorities hold that the green head is Greek, misled by the objective traits which are also common in late antiquity; but no Greek or Roman portrait ever achieved so rotund a solidity. The same fact alienates this head from Europe as distinguishes the drawings of Hamburg or Berlin classicists from Ingres: namely, provincialism.

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## ASSUAN

*End of December.*

WE arrived here in one bound the day before yesterday, and are leaving Luxor until the return journey. The idea of finding a second Cairo, temples and history and all, when we'd scarcely got started on the first, frightened us, and we propose to rub along without art for a few days.

I am not young enough for these experiences in the mass. You must take your time over Egypt, as you do on your first trip to Italy, even though your patience may eventually grow too short for much that Rome has to show. Now we are about to lay a foundation under a house which already is a sufficiently intricate structure. Anyhow we have torn ourselves away from Cairo.

Here we are living in cool summer weather. We are not staying at the sumptuous *Cataract* but at the *Grand Hotel*, whose position relieved us of the necessity of making our choice depend on material considerations. There are people who prefer the view from the terrace of the *Cataract*: an opinion based not so much on the surroundings as on social prejudice and on a need for comfort. If you have one of the front rooms there you can see the cataract from your bed or your bath. It is not the genuine cataract, to be sure: far from it. That lies a couple of kilometers farther south and stands in the same relation to the hotel-cataract as nature to the movies. The Nile bends suddenly here and carries a lot of rocks in its bed,

some of which have been grouped to please the guests. The Bastei in Saxon Switzerland boasts the same charms. Moreover, the Behns and their suite have just arrived at the *Cataract*.

The food is at least as good at our place, I maintain, and is incomparably better served. The other day a Swiss waiter at the *Cataract* suddenly poured Cumberland sauce all over Babuschka and hardly apologized. As we were guests there I couldn't tell the clumsy fool what I thought of him, and we had to behave as if we didn't mind a bit. Such a thing would be unthinkable at our hotel for the simple reason that apart from Franz, the maître d'hôtel, the whole staff is Sudanese; and you would as soon expect a practiced eye-specialist to operate on a nose by mistake for an eye as catch one of these people missing their grip in handling a dish. They hover between the tables in the dining-room, and their serving has a hieratic dignity. We call the handsomest the Prince. He is as slim as a whip and has the graceful features of a youth of the Old Kingdom; and his long narrow hands would turn whatever he offered you into a tidbit even if the cook were not as admirable as he is. Upstairs our Abdul is a trusty soul; he appears before your finger has left the bell-push, and anticipates your every wish. No detail of mending escapes him. He has darned my dress-coat and Babuschka's clothes, removes long-established stains from my old riding-breeches, and the moment we leave the room everything is tidied up and every speck of dust removed. Unconsciously we accept a nabob-like existence as though we had always been used to it. Babuschka possesses that natural gift for making exactly the right demands on servants which Whistler praised in his mother. Her home was an American plantation. Often she would sit idly at a window, gazing out and leaning on the sill. If the sky clouded over and the weather looked threatening, she would call to a slave boy:

“Jim, it's going to rain. Come help me to move.”

We are lying opposite the island of Elephantine, in the most

luxuriant stretch of the Nile. Here the stream offers its whole peculiar foaming torrent, and it would be unfair to compare it with the whirlpool in front of the *Cataract*. Instead of a capacious and indiscreet terrace exposed to the vulgar gaze, where the Behns spend their empty lives, a smooth and cosy balcony projects in front of our first-floor windows. In the morning you can easily step out with little on and cast your eye into the distance over the tops of the fragrant acacias, or some such trees, wave to the boats, laugh and joke with the Bischarin and only expose yourself to the public below. At a given moment you retire into your room. Now and then it occurs to you to drape yourself in your red silk dressing-gown. The Bischarin is entranced, partly because he loves color, partly because it gives him a chance of swinging his glass chain and dancing and producing from his caftan a lot of dried crocodiles of various sizes. His laughing face, full of fun, is capped by a mass of hair smeared with Nile mud till it looks like a crown of thorns.

The Bischarin are said to speak an idiom like ancient Egyptian; they bring in desert-produce on their camels. They camp in holes and tent just outside Assuan in the desert. If you go near, herds of naked children swarm out and crowd round your horse, clamoring for bakshish. So do all the other children, incidentally. Bakshish is synonymous with whites. The smallest ones don't yet know that you must hold out your hand as well.

In the morning I work, or pretend to do so. Babuschka sits for hours in the sun-bath on the flat roof of the hotel and draws. I can't stand it for more than ten minutes; it dazzles me. The sun-bath is also used by the lively blonde with the pretty legs and weak chest, who lunches daily with the smart Berlin doctor. Babuschka thinks there's something fishy about their relations with each other; consumptive people are always so sensual. Next to the doctor's table is the corner-table at which sits the crippled brunette and her nurse, also German. The brunette, very delicate, Yvonne's type,

moves with difficulty, which suits her extraordinarily well. To their right, beyond the window, sit the English couple. She is the sulkiest of all the red-wattled turkey-hens that England ever produced; in him the red, overlaid on blue, overflows on to his nose. Every day he polishes off a considerable amount of wine, and they never say a word to each other. The English clergyman and his wife come and have coffee at their table as a rule, and they are always as surprised as though they had never met before. The red-nosed man jumps up and doesn't sit down again until the reverend gentleman and his spouse are seated. The ladies converse in cooing tones; and as the red-nosed person is deaf the reverend gentleman trumpets the latest news into his ear. "A very fine day indeed!" Franz tells us that when his reverence arrived he always went about in a wheeled chair and could hardly whisper. The same was true of the head of a Breslau family in the back part of the room. Near them is the chirpy Irish maid, called Canary, whom you might take for seventeen and who is said to be a grandmother. It is all very simple and life glides by as light-footedly as our Sudanese. The invalids don't bother us at all; they even give an atmosphere of actuality, and as each declares he is much better, general peace and content prevail, while the parasites at the Cataract are pining away with boredom. We don't refuse, all the same, when we're invited there.

In the afternoon we always go for a ride in the desert, generally on our side, the Libyan or Arabian. To reach the Sahara on the other side you have to be rowed across to the opposite shore. I always feel a slight inclination to talk of the two deserts as if they were parts of Paris, on the right or left bank of the Seine. Whenever Herr Behn, with his sixteen camels and countless porters, bursts forth at this or that oasis it is quite another matter, although his deportment hardly concerns us except as a decorative arabesque. One lives on the edge of things. When we ride into the desert we come immeasurably closer to the donkeys which carry us. The

question whether he trots well or badly is more important than our espousal of the desert. Donkeys are extraordinary creatures. Here am I, a heavy fellow, carried by a weak-legged beast without grumbling; he might even gallop for a quarter of an hour at a stretch, and if the driver had his way we should never pause in our jogtrot career. Babuschka is always wrangling with her fellow who cannot get out of the habit of giving his donkey constant whacks on the hindquarters. If you take his stick away, he uses his fists. At one and the same moment he is heading straight for a consumptive's end and ruining his donkey. It must be so.

I don't know why, but I always imagined the desert quite different, flat and interminable, something like a Lüneburger Heide without vegetation and with an immensity of sand and sun-mysticism; it never occurred to me to connect the word with desolation. But that's what it is, at all events in these parts, and it probably goes on like that all the way to the Red Sea. A mountainous waste whose profile displays unmistakable signs of a catastrophe, and at the same time misses the formal harmony to which we are accustomed in more favored spots. Here there was war. A barrage of thousands of mortars has hacked up the ground, and countless subterranean mines once upon a time threw layers of stones, which had been reposing deep in the earth, high into the air and caused this indescribable havoc. As the fragments of rock once fell, blackened by fire, so they still lie today. Now and then you meet noble granite such as they once used for temples in the North. Oftener one is reminded of slag-heaps, such as you see on a small scale in our mining districts, and one can imagine that these heaps belonged to an industry conducted on a monstrous scale which one day was swept off the face of the earth.

The donkeys clamber up the heights with delicate care and stand as still as chairs while you dismount. It is superfluous to appraise the view over the Arabian desert, for nature has here shown her misanthropic intentions too plainly and the violence of the destruc-

tion has likewise robbed it of its grandeur. The slag-heap motifs are constantly repeated.

The Arabian desert is only beautiful on its very edges or when it forms a background to Babuschka and her donkey or serves some other use by way of contrast. It is beautiful to come upon the narrow strip of fertile land with its silvery palms and the Nile and to find bright yellow again after the dry and dusky hue of the desert. Really you only go out for the pleasure of coming back. On the return journey, as soon as you pass the huts of the Bischarin and enter the hilly village street the donkeys fall into a gallop of their own accord and there's no holding the drivers. Men gape at you from the doors of their houses, children shout, and you feel like Charlemagne. At the entrance to the bazaar it is so narrow that you have to stop. The donkey pushes his nose between the negroes carrying trays of sweetmeats. As soon as there's breathing space he's off again, and now the problem is how to arrive in good form. It is beautiful to put on a clean shirt and to dine with all possible ease; the desert is a mudbath for the eyes, a breaker of habits, a massage in itself. In addition the air is several degrees drier, so that before the war there was a German sanatorium in the desert. We should be in a position to utilize hygienically the calories released at the Last Judgment.

The *sakiyeh* squeals from morning till night. It is the sound of the wooden pins on the wheel, which is turned by an ox walking round and round in order to raise the Nile water in buckets on to the fields. Of course the wood is never greased. Badly oiled doors often squeak in the same way, only you must imagine the noise going on continually, as happened when we were children and kept swinging a door to and fro on its hinges until somebody came to give us a good spanking. This screeching goes on all along the Nile. It is something like the bagpipes, but less sonorous, and as no other sounds drown it you can hear it miles away. I get up early, about four o'clock as a rule, but the *sakiyeh* is going still

earlier. You forget that the noise is caused by the wood and an ox walking round and round, and you take it for a resonant property of the atmosphere. If you have nothing else to do, the continual repetition of the same phrase gets on your nerves, and you stop your ears. You see fat oriental women with painted woe-begone faces and drooping breasts; they loll on ottomans with the white Turkish stuff called nougat between their teeth. It often happens that you go out into the desert simply to get away from the *sakiyeh*. The ancient Egyptians must have known the sound, for they used the same method of irrigation. As soon as I start a serious conversation with anybody or attend to some business I find the *sakiyeh* not merely inoffensive but actually pleasant.

At Assuan the Nile indulges in its richest variations and does everything it can to prepare for the first cataract. Innumerable islands are dotted about; most of them are toys abandoned by the river, whose torrent once fretted the rocks into queer shapes when the course was different—funnels shaped like coffee-mills, so that you can't imagine how they ever were made, crazy weather-vanes that look as if they had been pulled out with gigantic corkscrews, and antediluvian spiral shelters. No river dreams of such antics in our part of the world.

The long stretch of Elephantine is idyllic. Once the island possessed its own god and temple, and in those days elephants must have occurred hereabouts. Now the island boasts a big yellow hotel with green shutters; it is the Savoy, the smartest hotel in Assuan, but it has been closed since the war, for even the others are hardly full. The big yellow building, surrounded by luxuriant palms and huge red flowering bushes, looks very well. Behind it run the irregular lines of the farther shore, on whose height ancient Egyptian rock-tombs open their black eyes; and just here you can make out the rectangular box with the bay in the center and the many rows of friendly windows. No ruin, even of the most sumptuous temple conceivable, can replace the seductive smartness

of modern Europe. Even Cook's patent many-decked steamers, white floating boxes, also with rows of windows, make quite a good appearance. A rowboat propelled by slaves, on which Pharaoh's general accommodated his half legion, would look absurd. Our towering boxes turn out to be the best trimming for the river landscape.

The Nile bends northward and our dark shore skirts the horizon in a mighty curve. This is the view that the people at the Cataract have no notion of; Babuschka has been trying to get it for weeks. It seems as though one must have gray hair to catch it. The curve surpasses everything in the river line and might well belong to an inland lake. You can even imagine a sea beach in the distance. Water and earth unite in a rare display of color and forget their usual functions: the water, that it is a river, and the earth, that it is solid ground. The sky contributes its share, and man clean forgets himself and longs to become an arch to span it.

Beyond, the yellow Sahara unfolds itself, like a yellow infinity. But maybe there lurks behind the waves of sand the same destroying hand as behind our curve, and only the façade is formed by the Nile. One ought to have an airplane. Gray heights rise out of the yellow, dotted with the eyes of the rock-tombs, and the topmost places are black. The yellow sand slips down into the valley in a smooth flat slope. There is nothing more delightful than to slide barefoot down the soft yellow furrows. Merely on looking down the slope you imagine the sensation.

The road along our bank, beyond the bend, leads to at least a dozen decent houses and is the pride of Assuan. Otherwise European dwellings are rare, and the greater part are helter-skelter huts made of Nile mud. In the courts palm-trees grow here and there, surprisingly close together, in picturesque confusion. As they are of varying height it often looks as though they were growing on the houses in dung which the natives are fond of using as a warming thatch. You become reconciled to the palm-trees

here. They have none of the neat decorativeness of an Italian or Spanish square and none of the symmetry which degrades them into pot plants even when they occur in masses. On account of their color I like to think they belong to a different species. Their scale of colors is not derived from the European green, which always looks slimy because of the structure of the palm, but from a dusty gray; and what they offer us is not contrast, which is no use here, but a silvery glitter. They are something like torches in the day-time. Perhaps that is the beauty of this place, that you get far less contrast but immeasurably more tones. Yellow and blue are the great dominants; but what a range of tones in between!

The blonde and the doctor go sailing every day. He hopes to shoot a crocodile and generally takes with him the hunter who wears a dilapidated cockade as a sign that he once served the German Crown Prince. He can say: "At your service." The Crown Prince shot crocodiles every day here, and for each of them the hunter got ten pounds. The silver cockade once bore the mark "*Jäger I.*" In course of time the *ä* has fallen out, and so we read *Jger*. The doctor will only go up to five pounds and wants me to go equal shares. Babuschka is enquiring about elephants. We saw two gigantic elephant-tusks at the station, the trophies of a Hungarian magnate; but they came from Khartum which is over a thousand kilometers to the South. We are on the edge of things here.

Just behind Schacht's house the street climbs up to the bazaar on its way out into the desert. The bazaar is just one street, a primitive version of the Muski in Cairo. As the roofs of the over-hanging houses are joined together with sailcloth on account of the sun, you feel almost as if you are in a house—a house where you find camels. They weave pretty baskets at Assuan and in the neighborhood. They are very sturdy, look as if they were made of colored twine, and carry quite heavy burdens. With such basket-work we have decorated the walls of our room, and ever since

then we have felt as if we had grown up in Assuan. Otherwise industry is confined to the manufacture of antiquities in which they ply an extensive trade. The chief imports are Offenbach, also Pforzheim, and then Solingen steel for the blades of negro daggers, which they sell in wrinkled crocodile-skin sheaths. Funeral caskets and the alabaster vases, in which the ancient Egyptians preserved the intestines of their beloved dead, are produced here on a huge scale; the alabaster varies in quality, and the cheapest is a sort of cheese which hardens in the sun and becomes odorless. In our latitudes it gradually returns to its original condition, becomes pliable and smells like Cheshire cheese. The better things are turned from genuine blocks of alabaster. Luxor and the ancient Thebes, the city of the tombs, are the centers of the sculpture industry. Many of the workers seem to resemble the Italians. At first I took every piece for a fake, but later on, relying on my increasing experience, I began to take a less prejudiced view which gave us much more spiritual satisfaction. I even succeeded in suppressing Babuschka's still deeper rooted distrust. One mustn't forget that they're always digging things up, day in, day out, not only in the authorized sites from which the finds have to go to the museums. To be sure, the natives are liable to punishment if they dig on their own responsibility, and by rights they are supposed to give up whatever comes into their possession, but naturally you might just as well try to keep the Milky Way under observation. The selection underground will last for a good while to come, even if the present comparatively restricted demand were to increase. Babuschka's dream would be to conduct a secret excavation of her own, and she has discussed it in all seriousness with Abdul, who to his loss quite failed to understand her. I should be better pleased with a small bronze on view in the tiny shop-window next door to the hotel; it represents two little parallel ichneumons on one base and was probably a funeral offering to a child of the eighteenth dynasty. Beside it stands a round open alabaster bowl of classic shape. Both

things are absurdly cheap, and Schacht thinks one could do even better. A dignified aloofness distinguishes the dealer very favorably from those in the bazaar. He speaks English with difficulty and counts Borchardt and many other museum people among his customers. After we had turned everything over to our heart's content we decided, in the interests of our Nubian expedition, to refrain from buying anything; but some days later—yesterday, in fact—when Babuschka and Frau Schacht had gone out for a ride by themselves and I was supposed to be working, I bought the bowl and the ichneumons, and besides these, a wonderfully preserved eighteenth dynasty marble head and a tiny bowl in the form of a fish, apparently an early one. It was intoxicating. Actually I had only gone out for a breath of air as an unusually extensive problem was troubling my head; but a craving for action excited my powers which were not enslaved by my work and drove me to this extravagance. I scarcely heard the dealer's soft words of greeting and certainly paid no attention to them. The bronze ichneumons shimmered with an unearthly patina and suddenly the scales fell from my eyes in an unexpected fashion. The alabaster bowl stood there for me alone and nobody else, a vessel for my long accumulated feelings; and the marble head—such a one as we had never dreamed of—was beyond all tormented reflections, the symbol of a leap from the humdrum of every day into the realms of poetry.

Babuschka made eyes; and the astounding fact impressed her so deeply that all comment died on her lips. We cleared the books and the tea-things away and set out the four objects on the polished wood of the commode. The head didn't look well in the middle, under the woven wall plaque, as I had originally planned, for this conventional arrangement seemed too commonplace and not on a par with the importance of the object; but we put it on the extreme left, half way back. On the extreme right, in the foreground, we put the alabaster bowl, as a balance to the head, and in

between, in a picturesque zigzag, the bronze and the black fish on whose back closer inspection revealed choice engraving. We went to the shop again today. If one devoted a tithe of this lust for gazing to the things in a museum one might learn something. Purchasability is the most seductive quality of a work of art.

Dr. Beermann has got his crocodile. It was sunning itself on a rock not far from the cataract and is said to have been two yards long. After the death-blow it still had strength enough to disappear into the Nile and to expose the Doctor to our skepticism. The *Jger's* contention that its corpse would come to the surface again in a day or two was not taken seriously by anybody, not only because the Doctor frankly admitted that he had never shot so much as a hair, but also because a beast two yards long, capable of gobbling up a man, was hardly in place here. As an experienced doctor, accustomed to reckoning with psychological factors in every case, and penetratingly conscious of the limits of human observation, Dr. Beermann treated his day's sport with cheerful self-mockery which suited his comfortable appearance, and submitted with a good grace to the chaff of the nurse. Only his blonde table-companion, who had taken part in the hunt, insisted on the *coup de grce* and had followed every movement of the beast with her field-glasses. Babuschka took this as a confirmation of her suspicions as to the sinister relations between them; I was convinced that the opposite was true, and the event showed I was right.

But the improbable had happened, for yesterday morning they actually landed the crocodile. It was not two yards long, to be sure: not much more than half that length and quite a young beast. Still it was a crocodile right enough. We have seen and smelt it. Already it stank like the plague. The doctor had it stuffed and took it home with him; he even sacrificed to it the promised bottle of champagne. Then his uncommonly sympathetic views on German politics made their appearance into the bargain; he too will have none of Rathenau and gives Ebert a minor place. His

optical delusion remains unexplained. He had plenty of time to make sure of the beast's length, and besides there was the rock it lay on for him to measure by. He swore it was a good two yards, called the *Jger* a swindler, and declared that this journey that ended in the hunting-party was the last he'd ever undertake. One should never have doubts about human nature.

But the story has a sequel. . . . We were sitting in the hall. The Schachts were there too, Frau Schacht in white with an oriental shawl. There are heaps and heaps of pretty women here.

"Do you believe, my dear sir," said Dr. Beermann, turning to Dr. Schacht, "that there are any crocodiles at Assuan?"

Schacht thought not. Not one had been this side of the cataract for thirty years.

"But what about the other side?"

Schacht said yes. At times they even came quite near the dam.

"Then how do you account for my crocodile on this side?"

"It must have got through the sluice by accident."

"But isn't that very unlikely, sir?"

"Extremely!"

Beermann nodded. The yellow lady and the nurse were coming out of the lift. The nurse ordered a whiskey.

"No," said Beermann very emphatically, "it must have come over land."

Schacht, with the caution due to a colleague, held his peace. I pointed out that the alligator's dachshund-like pedals would make locomotion on foot too slow an affair to allow him to escape our notice, especially near the dam. The doctor, however, believes quite other things to be possible.

"Why of course!" says the blonde. (She has kept to her room since the adventure.)

"For crocodiles," continued the doctor (he has a quaint way of saying crocodile . . . a flowery way, I should call it) ". . . crocodiles are able to change their nature."

"How?" asked the nurse.

"Why not?" demanded the blonde, with spirit, while Babuschka, who was not in a position to kick my foot, tried to catch my eye.

Beermann ordered a whiskey. Two meters was his length for the crocodile, and now it turned out to be one meter, seventeen. The possibility of shrinkage so far observed in mammals is comparatively slight and moreover it does not happen in a few days.

Perhaps the crocodile will reach two meters when it's stuffed, I suggested, and told them how Hama, our dearly beloved Japanese setter, had been run over by a bus and had come back from being stuffed in the shape of a mastiff.

Schacht asked for the *Jger*.

"Very well," said Beermann; and now comes the dénouement.

Crocodile-hunting at Assuan is a drama reserved for strangers, a puppet-show and, as such, more modern than those customary festivals at home, at Oberammergau, Bayreuth and Salzburg, which are carried out by living actors and are exposed to all the dangers of dramatic routine. The *Jger*, the Reinhardt of Assuan, resembles the latest Russians in that he gets his effects exclusively by inspired producing. The crocodile puppet is placed on a rock: no ordinary natural rock, of course, but a scene prepared with due regard for technical and psychological considerations. It contains the apparatus corresponding to the puppet's wires—a movable plank, in fact, painted like a rock, the crocodile-board. On this reposes the stuffed monster like the slumbering Siegfried on his upholstered booby-trap. The board reaches under water and is connected to a system of rods which are worked from the wings. When the shot hits, the board slips into the water and the crocodile disappears into the watery trap. After a few days they present the marksman with the corpse of a beast killed in the south they have fetched down in the meantime.

Babuschka inquired why they didn't put the original crocodile straight onto the rock, and revealed what a featherpate she is.

"It would stink too much," remarked the doctor.

Schacht, who is familiar with this drama, related how a brace of crocodiles fell to an American Nimrod last year. In memory of it the good man gave a thousand pounds to the Christian Mission at Assuan.

We joined company with the Behn family and were asked to dinner. There was masses of good caviare and moderate wine and the claret was served in green goblets. Frau Behn who comes from Hanover talks through her nose in a refined voice and prefers words with an ö in them. What a blessing to be rid of that hörrible Europe. Babuschka is an enkönting person. There is nothing so lövely as sailing through the eternal sand alone on a ship of the desert. Hunting is löthsome, on the other hand, especially for these alligators who are among the sacred beasts. You find the whöle soul of the country in a camel, and the cröcodile's eyes are pathötic.

Her husband takes the oh-how-pretty view of life and won't risk his life over out-of-the-way things. The *Jger* is a scamp, of course, but useful enough. He will take him hunting big game up the White Nile. I can join them, if I care to. Babuschka is entitled "young lady"; she can come too.

"Böhn," says Frau Behn, "dön't be sö impröper!"

She suffers on her husband's account. Egon is a genius, of course, but he has nō psychic sense and so nō sense of reality such as natures like herself possess. She has ströggled with it.

"Egon too, I assure you, is pathötic."

After this I took Babuschka away to our terrace under the stars, and the evening thickened round us.

Then Frau Behn called to her swain:

"Oh, Egon . . .

If only you were what I wanted,  
And I were what you wanted too  
Oh Egon,

We should, I fancy, prove inconstant  
You to me and I to you."

The tombs dating from the Middle Kingdom on the opposite bank of the Nile belonged to provincial grandees and are nothing special. The guardian, a nice man with a blind eye that reminded us of Ibrahim, showed them to us thoroughly, but the view over the Nile valley diminished our interest in the rock-caves. We climbed the heights and gazed at the panorama, and here it was that Babuschka made her discovery. While I was admiring the palette of the evening sky she amused herself as she lay in the warm yellow sand by letting it run through her fingers. This gradually irritated me, for this playful occupation seemed out of key with the nobility of the panorama and jarred on my enthusiasm. I know it's her way to pour cold water on one's enthusiasm; and of course it is possible to enjoy the sky with one's fingers in the sand. After a time without looking at her I thought I noticed a change in the rhythm of her hands. The original playful movement became purposeful and more energetic. Something dark took shape in the sand and compelled me to turn my eyes towards it. Silently she pointed to the object, a fragment of an Osiris in black stone, about thirty centimeters high and quite fascinating. A considerable part was still covered in caked sand, but the immaculate condition of the right half of the face and the royal headdress was already visible. The flowing garment enveloped the limbs. Only an insignificant piece below was missing. I stared at the thing greedily. My hands twitched and I couldn't say a word.

"Middle Kingdom," said Babuschka quietly. "The tombs belong to the Middle Kingdom."

"Of course. Quiet now!"

She implored me not to shout although there was nobody near. The panorama was astonishingly unimportant.

"Quiet now!" I repeated three times in a stupid way while my

brain raced. The type often occurred—in the upstairs cases at Cairo, for instance—but this version surpassed all the things in the case. The cases were out of the picture altogether. The first consideration, however, was how to get the thing home. Quiet now! Once it was in our trunk, we had nothing to fear. I was wearing a tweed coat without a waistcoat. Tweed is admirably suited to such purposes; its weight was quite endurable. Pushed under the coat it bulged out, but this could be concealed with a little skill. You stuck the thing sideways between your ribs and your arm and held it by putting your hand through the slit in the pocket. Raskolnikoff carried a heavy hatchet under his coat. We practiced. I had to keep on pulling it out, for a new charm was revealed on each occasion. Even if it only came from the New Kingdom it was still a jewel. One would either fasten the torso on a bronze pin fixed into the stone plinth, in which case the height of the pin must correspond with that of the missing foot, or else have a wooden base modeled to allow the piece to rest loosely in it. That would be preferable, as one could then take the thing in one's hand. We tried to make a support out of sand and pebbles, in order to study the effect, but it didn't hold.

Suddenly the guardian appeared. I tried to hide the statuette, but it was too late. The man was smiling in an indolent detached way. I quietly showed him our find.

"Osiris!" he said. "Good!" Good was the only English word he knew.

"Very good!" I nodded and offered him a cigarette.

He took the cigarette and the Osiris too, and then came a torrent of Arabic whose drift was clear enough. He must give the thing up to the Kadi at Assuan.

"Well I never," said Babuschka, as if it was my fault, when it was she who urged me to unbutton my coat again. She argued the point, and mentioned the little pile of sand. As for that, it was I, and not she, who advised it during the discussion about the pedestal.

In any case it didn't signify, for the business was now over and done with. I told her to come quietly and admire the view with me. I nodded briefly to the guardian. As you please . . . we don't care . . . good-by! . . . Then we turned to the panorama. The intensity of the yellow would have been impossible in Italy and was due to reflections from the desert.

"Phew!" said Babuschka.

"If you look once more at the fellow, I'll give up and go back home." My voice trembled.

She lay down on her back and gazed at the sky. So we remained for a quarter of an hour; from time to time I said yes, yes . . . for lack of something better to say, and waved my hand towards the view. Then we quietly and amicably took our leave of the guardian and made as though we were going home. I sent Babuschka on ahead. For showing us around the guardian got a tip . . . neither too large nor too small. Unconcernedly I played about with a five pound note at the same time. He still held the statuette in his hand. I still kept up my studied indifference. Then, as though a sudden idea had struck me, I put the note into his hand in place of the statuette, placed the thing very slowly and carefully under my tweed coat, gave him a brief nod, and went after Babuschka, who was already half way down. I concealed the result from her and implied that I had hopes of taking the matter up tomorrow. As we were getting on board the boat I very nearly dropped the thing but Babuschka noticed nothing in her dejection. She held me responsible, of course, but refrained from reproaching me.

When we got home she went off at once to talk to Frau Schacht. Meanwhile I cleaned the thing and discovered that the damage to the left side of the face was far less serious than we had at first been led to believe. In the hope of finding a temporary base I went to see our dealer. He happened to have one which might have been made for it. When I asked how he liked the thing, he smiled

engagingly and finally told me that he thought it was a good, a very good reproduction. Now it was my turn to smile; such is the jealousy of dealers. It caused us all this confusion and gave art-dealers their peculiar relish for depreciation. On this occasion, however, he needn't try to score off a rival. This piece, covered with sand thousands of years old, we had dug up with our very own hands.

My announcement fell quite flat. It was composition, not stone, the dealer insisted, and took a bite at it to prove it. It was unpleasant to see the thing in the man's mouth. As it turned out, he showed me a distinct mark of his teeth in the material and the place where he had bitten was pink. This demonstration only proved, however, that the ancient Egyptians knew perfectly well how to make casts, as I had already been told.

The dealer invited me into the back of his little shop, opened a cupboard, and showed me four or five pieces exactly like mine to a hair's breadth, and all covered with sand thousands of years old. They came from Bunzlau, but he got them from the agent in Cairo, a Greek.

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## THE TRIP TO NUBIA

THE journey to the second cataract had long been decided upon, and only the means of transport was still causing us delay. Ordinary people go from Assuan to Wadi-Halfa by Cook's steamer and prefer to wear their dinner jackets and devote themselves to their usual dances even in Nubia. We longed to be rid of the ordinary forms of hotel existence for a day or two, and, limited to our own company, to give ourselves up to the various impressions of Nile travel. Besides, the steamer gets to Abu Simbel, the most striking point, by night, stops only a couple of hours, and does not allow a thorough examination of the rock-temple. Above all, Cook displays the temple by electric light.

The merchant in the square possessed a small motor-boat—a mere nutshell—which you can charter. It is generally used simply for short afternoon trips; but last year it conveyed two famous German savants to Nubia, and would therefore do quite well enough for us. The only point to bear in mind was the necessity for spending our nights in an open boat. There was a kind of cabin aft, to be sure, but its very narrow bunk would only hold Babuschka at the most, and as it also contained the minute W. C. it was not very inviting. We brought along our beds, with our bedding and winter clothes as well, and made arrangements for a trial night, as we were advised to do. Schacht produced Mohammed

Sherkaui, the captain of the two German savants. His cheerful and reliable appearance immediately encouraged us. Mohammed belongs to the Nubian intelligentsia and even talks some German. We made our terms with him in a friendly fashion. For a lump sum down he undertook the whole journey there and back, including the engaging of the necessary crew. We should have to do without onions and leeks and such things, on account of the cost.

Mohammed fetched us at the hotel one fine morning and took us and our things to Shellal on the dam, where the motorboat, which had previously been brought through the lock, was to await us. It was still at the last sluice and we went across the dam. That takes a good half-hour, unless you travel on a little transport wagon that runs on rails. This dam is no ordinary affair; it is as wide as a decent-sized street and has two tracks, one for the little wagon aforementioned, and another—much wider—for the crane. It is made entirely of stone and stretches like a straight thread for nearly two kilometers. On one side, towards the Sudan, it is only a trifle higher than the water level; the other stone wall towers above the almost empty rocky bed of the Nile, and the water which escapes in cascades through the sieve was a mere trifle compared with the expanse of stony bed which resembles the skeleton of a giant who had been knocked out and has fallen there. They have used granite for their building-material. The thickness gradually decreases with the height like the pylon of a temple, but the moderate size does not dispel the impression of artificiality and it remains astonishing that the dam can withstand the mass of water pent up inside for hundreds of kilometers into Nubia. Although doubtless everything is calculated twice and three times over, one cannot help feeling a bit uncomfortable, like a rope-dancer. At short intervals along the edge of the stone track are the black iron bars by which the 180 water-sluches deep down below are released or closed. At this time only about two are kept open, as little water is needed. On the black iron the name of the English firm is cast in solemn letters.

The crane is designed to travel to the bars and to open them with its projecting derrick. This black traveling apparatus with its gallows running on a chain is a grotesque enlargement of the machine with which the dentist drills your teeth. A little black man attends to it; he was standing half concealed behind the iron partition. You could see his amiable face, which was not much lighter than the iron, and his gray beard round his thick lips.

As the little black man feels disposed, he gives Egypt a drink or lets it stay thirsty. As we came up the crane was about in the middle of the dam and appeared to be out of action. Suddenly it started off quite fast with a jolt and a clatter, came to meet us and turned its gallows as it came. There was something surprising about the simultaneousness of the two movements. It stopped just as suddenly and remained on the watch. People with some technical experience would see nothing odd in such a crane; and I have seen hundreds like it in many harbors and also in my brother's iron-foundry in Westphalia. At Shellal one was forced to look at it at close quarters and I must confess that I found this iron affair distinctly uncongenial. According to Baedeker the dam has enabled over 200,000 hectares of Egypt to be reclaimed for cultivation and Egyptian national resources are increased about 15 million pounds. As a consequence the upper Nile has become like a mountain-lake in Upper Bavaria and one would never be surprised to see a boatload of yodelling lads and maidens in their Sunday best on the way to church.

There is nothing like these cruises in tiny boats. In the aforesaid aft cabin, which we don't use, Mohammed has stowed away his tackle. Then come the engine-room and the wheel. Here the crew squat: three men, apart from Mohammed—steersman, mechanic (whom Mohammed calls the engineer), and cook. The latter usually sits on our side. Apart from the engineer, a Copt who wears a city cap and displays signs of social unrest, all are dressed in a turban and a gown which is meant to be white. The steersman sits

on the rail with his hand on the wheel and gazes quietly about him with his hawk-eye. Then comes our domain, marked off by a step, three paces long. A little table, two basket chairs and an awning over our heads. To crank up the engine you have to move the table and lean into the dark hole. The engine sets the boat in a pleasant vibration. The bow of the boat forms the cupboard-like galley; in the tiny door sits the cook with his back to us, a real roundhead, and juggles with the pots on the spirit-stove. It is comfortable. Now and then Babuschka lies on the narrow pointed roof, with her face in her hands: a mermaid figurehead, such as you find on old galleons.

Soon after Shellal we passed the island of Philae, once the pearl of Egypt; or rather, we traveled over it, close to the point by the temple pylon covered with hieroglyphs. Alongside it the capitals of the celebrated kiosk rise out of the water. Baedeker says that the islands famed in song have lost much of their charm since the building of the dam; he is right, and the same applies to most submerged objects. Imagine what St. Mark's would look like if the lagoon covered it and only the strange outline of the roof were left. So long as 200,000 hectares of land can be reclaimed for cultivation, humanity is not to be joked with. Without great inconvenience the English might have made this contribution to culture a couple of kilometers further south, as Borchardt proposed; but the English are a law unto themselves where culture is concerned. As a Nubian, Mohammed Sherkaui dislikes the dam and misunderstands the indirect advantages of the 200,000 hectares. The conception of national resources is also lost upon him. From his point of view the dam is no good except to one or two rich Egyptians and the Nubians are left in the damp. They were advised to abandon the place and settle down in other hectares elsewhere. You might as well give the same advice to the temples of Philae, or the palms too. It's a shame, the way they've treated the palms. The tops of the palms rise above the water everywhere, and you

might take them for reeds. Since the Nubians refused to leave, new houses were built for them a couple of meters higher up than the sunken ones; under pressure Mohammed admits that they are better than the old ones. They keep to the native style: boxes of Nile-mud bricks which mimic the gray they stand on. Only when you sail quite near in to land do they detach themselves from the rocks. Sometimes they have curved roofs which dispense with windows and suggest a modernized version of ancient Egypt. In the upper part of the wall the windows are replaced by a practical and prettily constructed lattice-work. Sometimes white dishes decorate the blue walls over the doors: an ingenious contrivance of a craftsman who had to extract a smile out of a slender budget, and not bad ornament in its homely way. Dishes do not seem necessary in these parts for other purposes, for it remains a mystery how people get anything to eat in this dearth of fruitful land. Mohammed, who could perhaps enlighten us, professes ignorance. Not a speck of green, mile after mile; only gray mimicking gray. Then you come to thin green strips like the slopes of a railway embankment. Women are at work among the shrubs and never look up, though we pass quite close by.

There are only women and children in the land. Men who can earn money are in the North and come up now and then for a visit. Family life is under water.

When the strips get wider you find a *sakiyah* knocked together out of unshaped timber and branches; it is shaded with leafage and turned by a leisurely ox, and its litany lulls the ear to sleep. Quite half the water it picks up is lost, because the buckets don't fit or the gutter leaks. That is the picturesque part; the natives are not aware of this charm, of course, but still they let the water run. Indolence drags them back; but is that the only thing that prevents their realizing just the slight improvements which would follow upon the strengthening of the wood and the doubling of the water-supply? It is easy for people who are used to the dam to realize it.

Perhaps it is lightheadedness rather than perversity, perhaps preoccupation with things we do not even guess at, perhaps a silly, but enjoyable, self-confidence and openhandedness. *Sakiyeh* and dam—the distinction could hardly be made more clearly. Instinctive dread of the machine may also drive them to waste their water. Possibly they do it out of protest.

Such a trip on the Nile is a pleasant affair. A hill on the horizon at the right moment reminds me of the pyramids and considerably impairs my parallel between dam and *sakiyeh* with which I was feeling rather satisfied. Can one represent Egypt by that pathetic *sakiyeh*? One must leave that to the stone triangles in the North. If that is settled, the question arises: the pyramids and Chefren's gate and the severely geometrical temple-plans at Sakkara, is the whole logic of ancient Egyptian architecture so remote from the dam?

The pylon-like dam stores up reflections from the early days which I thought I had long since left behind in the stream of experience; and the idea of cubism, which occurred to me on my first visit to the pyramids, came back as fresh as ever and squeezed my brain. In their golden age these people erected cult-buildings of astounding actuality. Five thousand years later a god-forsaken humanity builds dams and sky-scraping office-blocks with the same actuality and in the same style, as symbols of a world controlled by the calculating machine.

Under certain local conditions one may consider the pyramids as the climax of monumental architecture; and these conditions obtain in Egypt. Where the pyramids stand we can conceive nothing more natural than these structures which are accessible even at the furthest possible range and which entrust the whole of their ornamentation to the sun alone. We are amazed at the efficacy of this abstraction, but we are able to reflect that this abstract architecture can become accessible to a people who at the very same time rose in sculpture to a point which no other people has ever

reached. The reflection comes to us all the easier because we are accustomed also to regard European sculpture of the great periods as the accompaniment of a building, and to regard the separation of the one from the other as the last stage on the path to the summit.

The release of architecture from sculpture, which in the Old Kingdom strikes us as the crowning reward of artistic effort, recurs in the buildings of a great modern city; here it is the natural result of universal refusal, the expression of a mechanism which can no longer put up cult-buildings, which indeed no longer requires them, since the gods have withdrawn. Not much is lost, and you may say that the noblest temple and the best dam are the same in character. What is lost? Does the difference lie in the pent up waters and the 200,000 hectares reclaimed for cultivation? I needn't go into details; it seems to me that the pyramid still remains more abstract than the dam. I could discuss it with all conceivable relativity and subtlety. But what prevents us from building a viaduct in the purest pyramid-style? This style is mathematical and anybody can make use of it. To apply it rightly you need intellect, taste and a certain sensitiveness to the requirements of the site: the regular characteristics that belong also to the artist's make-up, but which assuredly do not determine his creative existence. A floating white box with rows of windows may look better on the Nile than the noblest golden galley; but nobody thinks of calling the builder of Cook's steamer an artist. Preëminent wisdom and admirable discipline urged the Egyptians, at the moment when their creative powers were at their height, to achieve the unadorned temple, the pyramids, a rational structure which has again become appropriate to our own needs. The moment is of extraordinary importance. In their unadorned temples built of smooth granite blocks they set up the incomparable monuments of their kings and gods, and established them as models of how to house each sculpture. The slightest ornament on the gateway of Chefren, which sheltered the diorite statues—any attempt whatever to bring statue and wall

closer together—would have spoilt the echo of the monument. When the Middle Kingdom took to these devices and united pillar and statue, the highest point was already past. For the rest, a comparison with our own age simply results in a confirmation of our ideas upon the limitations of architecture, which is never in a position to satisfy the final criteria that we apply to sculpture, painting and poetry. If the Egyptians had never set the sphinx beside the pyramids, if the Zoser, the Chefren and the countless other miraculous achievements of their sculpture, in Cairo and elsewhere, were not contemporary with their temples, I do not know how we should ever have realized that they were the greatest artistic race on earth. What would the Russians mean to us if we had only their songs and dances without their Dostoievskis? But as we do possess them, our pleasure in the other things increases. Contemporaneity raises each genre far above its relative value, while a restricted view of each by itself reduces it. We for our part must do away with this tendency to restrict and so to reduce.

For the first two days the gallows-like iron crane and the little black man haunted me; and I had a feeling of something vulgar whenever I thought of it. At every submerged palm-tree it recurred and oppressed me, as though I were a shareholder in the English firm. In summer, when the Nile-lake sinks, the place must look quite different. In August even Philae reappears, and the old houses with their dishes rise up below the new ones, and the palms get their trunks back again. I suppose that is when the men visit their families. For a couple of months the earth becomes normal; the little black man has opened the iron sluice. It's all quite logical, and people get used to it. Even the parts that become submerged have a charm of their own. Possibly they gain in relief and become simplified; but this simplification costs them their individuality. In antiquity, when nature alone was responsible for the inundations, that was spared them.

Modern man plays tricks with nature, europeanizes it, turns it

into a great wash-basin. They'll be putting Greenland in an oven next. There are two sides to these 200,000 hectares; the triumph of civilization is mixed up with gas-warfare and such jests, which one remembers in the desert. It lacks moderation and context. This water is neither lake nor river, confuses the planes and sullies the forms. It won't do. The mountains are too low for the wide expanse. Very likely Baedeker overestimates the charm of the temples at Philae; they do not belong to a good period, and even in the reproductions you can detect a lot of rubbish. But had the inducement been sufficient they would have done just the same with the pyramids and the sphinx. People who build dams are the devil's own kin.

The cook, a stumpy bit of goods with a thick round head, looks, from behind, like somebody I know and can never identify. In his doll's kitchen he manufactures soups which are every bit as good as those at the Grand Hotel, stuffed pigeons, puddings, puff-pastry like the *Mehlspeisen* at Döbling, *bei Majestät*. Probably a choleric temperament, but self-controlled. When the people aft lean too much to one side, his soup slops over. Then a quarter-turn of his brachycephalous skull, and his upper lip lifts a trifle, like a cat that is just going to mew and then is too bored to go through with it. The others take the hint and trim their weight as he wants it, without interrupting their conversation. He is the only one whom we see saying his prayers. For this purpose he installs himself on the galley-roof, if it isn't occupied by Babuschka, kneels down, bows slowly and deeply towards the East with his thick head on the floor and murmurs his words. Children pray like that. In the Pension Heuermann fat little Philip, whom we called Phips, did it. The others, apart from the Coptic engineer, probably pray aft on the cabin roof. The Copt looked at me once during the cook's performance and registered a smile, though I myself was doing nothing of the kind. However, he understands his own business and keeps his rattletrap old engine in order.

Mohammed is as imposing as a butler who has been in the family for thirty years and who will have his say. Although the narrowness of the boat makes it inconvenient and we insist on our disregard for ceremony he refuses to hold out the dish to me immediately after serving Babuschka, but clammers round the table and serves me on the left, as is proper. He recommends the best pieces and urges us on with royal authority. We shall take back at least half the tinned things we have brought with us. In the evening we look for a creek with as much shelter as possible, in which to spend the night, and then Mohammed prepares our berth with care. A sheet is hung across the step in order that we may change in privacy. Table and basket-chairs are stowed on the galley-roof, innumerable covers are laid on the floor. Our night toilet consists in putting on all the clothes we possess, and so doesn't last long. We spent the first night in a tiny spot called Meriyeh. No human being appeared in front of the gray huts. We walked to the top of the hill to stretch our legs. In the darkness of night the desolation was even more menacing. Something might be lurking behind every rock, with eyes that could see by night. The crew stayed on the bank and we clambered back along the plank on to the boat. Through the rods of the canopy you could see the starry sky which looked like a piece of stuff when you were half asleep, and came quite close. You forgot the dimensions and the glitter seemed like a noiseless function of an organism accompanied by the foolish lapping of the waves. The night sharpened one's hearing. A dog barking in the distance—so far that the stars seemed nearer—sent a shiver down your spine. You froze more sharply than in Siberia. The air hurt your head, as if your brain were bare. And the black gallows thing was there.

In the morning the galley-roof turns into a washstand. I strip to the skin; and the air, still very fresh, acts like a douche. The Nile is both water-supply and waste-pipe. You draw up the water by a string in a preserve-tin. The spirit-stove is already sizzling

for our tea; for the cook comes later on, and Mohammed waits for a sign from us. To give him time to clear away we inspect the temple of Gerf-Husen hard by; and our thoughts turn more on breakfast than on Rameses, who carved the temple out of the rock. They attacked the stone as though it were wax, but for all that there is a certain want of intensity. At Abu-Simbel it must all have been on a much grander scale. While we are eating breakfast in a devout frame of mind, we are getting on towards Dakkeh. The sun is beginning to warm up. I stupidly left my nail-scissors at Assuan; a loss of this kind may spoil a whole expedition. The cook has a pair, and produces a Gillette outfit as well. While I express my appreciation, he again lifts his lip like a cat that suppresses a mew. The tea is first class.

Lilac mountains, yellow sand, trembling blue, shimmering air, and the solid dry wood of the little boat with the basket chairs and the napkin on the straw table. In addition, Hegemann's book on Fridericus. One can also smoke and chatter to Babuschka, and there is still a drop of tea in one's cup. I can't forget the frosty night that's behind us, that foolish, wave-lapped, silvery night with the passive icebound horizon, that the blessed day has turned into an active element in the landscape. Nothing can replace such a night once it has gone by. Nothing equals the rapture of feeling the sun on one's back after such a night in an ice-grotto, and noticing the gentle hum of the engine. Along with this goes the vibration of my Hegemann, as he trots out his Fridericus, and the prevailing yellow (ochre, like English mustard), and the temple of Dakkeh, urgently recommended by Mohammed and neglected by us, because it would have been out of the question to get the sun off our backs and lay aside our books.

"Crocodile!"

"Where?"

"There! Under the mimosa!"

Two, in fact. Hi! Two great brutes under the mimosa . . . they

aren't budging . . . phew, very nearly caught the cake-tin. . . . Oh, they're off . . . good by!

Yes: as for this Hegemann . . . I believe I now can identify the cook. Look at his skull; don't think of its size, look at the shape, and note the childlike shoulders. There's only one man like that: Franz Werfel. I simply must write to Vienna. As soon as I get to the end of the chapter, I'll sit down to the table. There's no real hurry, though; the post doesn't go for a week. . . . Would you mind drawing the curtain a bit . . . it's going on very nicely now. . . . It's odd that this Hegemann is really an architect; I should have guessed he was a doctor or a lawyer. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad plan to turn round and rest my legs on the stool. At home I should have read three books this size—if I'd had any time for reading, that is. Last year it was a perfect scandal. However, now it's past it was wonderful. . . . *Café-au-lait* tones are now getting mixed up with the yellow of the Sahara, and the blue is deeper. It's remarkable how it's deepening at this very moment. . . . Why can't she take her crayons and try to draw that bit with the mountain at the side? And she might as well write to her mother. What can she be reading? She hasn't turned round for a quarter of an hour.

Naturally Lutz gets annoyed with Hegemann's dry pawky style; and one can see why. I rather think these artificial surroundings would get on my nerves at home. The yellow would do it and the vibration of the engine. I shan't be able to see Old Fritz for a yellow halo. Lutz misunderstands Hegemann's frenzy. Nobody is allowed to clean up Old Fritz with any objective arguments, wet or dry; this cannot be justified even if he suffers for it. Fridericus is no flight of fancy, no Penelope, no Sphinx, but an uncommonly real fact belonging to the armature of our political thought, and therefore counting as one of the springboards for our frenzy; and it is important to arrange the boards so that at least we can take off in the right direction. If we are unable to see Zoser and Chefren

clearly for lack of adequate documentation about their personalities, that does not hamper either our democratic attitude or our solid relations with ancient Egypt. We can always get into touch with these people, if only with the help of rational deductions from the abundantly available monuments of their art. Nile and desert help a bit, but only when the structure of their relations is fixed and the façade needs nothing more than a coat of yellow paint. The structure can only be erected according to the system which helps us to examine our own monuments. Hence our Egypt will never come nearer to the so-called historical fact, the thing-in-itself, than our pronunciation of the royal names to the sounds with which those rulers indicated themselves. Ten different Egyptologists are wont to pronounce those names in ten different ways. It doesn't matter; it matters as little as our valuation of the litany of the *sakiyeh*, which may well have been an aria out of Figaro to the ancients. The only thing about ancient Egypt that charms us is what it has in common with us, with our desires and with our dreams. As this common factor is art, that will provide us with the safest and most general portrait of the people, if only in a sort of bird's eye view which does not indicate what they ate or drank on Sunday. Eminently historical personalities and facts reduce themselves to a paltry jumble, yet the actual truth, as far as it concerns us, may still emerge quite clearly. That depends simply on the intensity with which we examine the object from our bird's eye standpoint, without bothering about things outside its range which thus merely serve to confuse the picture. Hence we come to give the widest importance to art, which in our day no longer can drag any dog from the fire.

The yellow of the sand now looks like an ice-pudding they served at the Grand Hotel the other day. Babuschka is actually asleep.

This Hegemann has profited by the example of the inadequacy of Prussian historians who try to examine Old Fritz in a perspec-

tive adapted to ancient Egypt, and thus neglect facts which must impress the critical understanding with all the weight of monumental evidence. That won't work. I can't play bridge if I look at the cards merely as a graphic display of color effects.

The book buzzes pleasantly on like a diligent bee. It fits in with the vibration of the engine. It might be a wasp, possibly. . . . It's a notable advantage of this Nile trip, the absence of insects. Not a fly, let alone a gnat; at home we should be plagued by vermin in the most modest places.

Men being what they are, we do not enjoy the advantages of our position but look about for objections. The sun is now beginning to scorch a bit, though the passage of air makes it cool enough. For a joke I'll note down the day and the hour: 11.30 on January 15th. Next year we'll speak of it again.

Probably Hegemann is exaggerating; he didn't write his book in view of the Sahara, with the result that he sees Fridericus too yellow, without the tones between mustard and *café au lait*. But he's right about one thing: yellow is not sky-blue, and never can be. Compared with the color-blindness of national historians that is a result worth noting. Books ought only to be written on the Nile, with the sun on one's back, after those lightning-blue frosty nights. Gradually a change of place must be taken into consideration; and one ought to arrange oneself more in the middle with one's back to the wheel. The question arises in these circumstances whether one's feet can remain on the stool if Babuschka doesn't move a bit to one side. Nine-tenths would probably remain unwritten; but that would be no disadvantage. Only really frenzied books, which can stand any temperature, would ever see the light of day.

Midday, in unexpected heat, at the temple of Es Seuba. An avenue of Rameses statues and sphinxes: Babuschka is photographing them. On one of the reliefs the color is partly preserved: brick-red and lemon-yellow—Van Gogh's palette. It is odd what a touch

of color suggests! The Copts have made a church out of the temple; or tried to make one, with a dour protestant entrance, and have painted over the old reliefs with Christian saints who haven't lasted. Egypt is always breaking through. The combination of Egyptian forms with our religious usages is startlingly incongruous.

Children came along with chameleons and wouldn't go away; they did not know the word bakshish, however. Two boys galloped smartly by on a donkey. Afterwards they kept our boat company and Babuschka wanted to take them along with us. They stuck their fingers in their mouths and stared at us.

Ten or twenty kilometers farther on, hills and mountains appeared on the same bank and reminded us quite distinctly of sphinxes. Mohammed struggled with knitted brows to understand what I meant, and by the time I'd made him see my point the picture had changed again. We spent the night near the town of Derr, where Mohammed has many connections; and we tried to fortify ourselves against the disintegrating effects of night with alcohol which we found in a pub belonging to a Greek. Mohammed took a nip to prove his independence of religious proscriptions. The night was no warmer than the first, but it went by quicker. Next time we'll bring fur caps with us. I told Babuschka racy stories from Paris.

On the morning of the third day Abu-Simbel came in sight. In the farthest mountain in the group there was a piece cut out; and then two such places appeared, the larger being the entrance to the King's Temple, the other the entrance to the Queen's. We landed at a difficult spot where you have to climb the escarpment on all fours; and then you stand before the four giants and feel for the first moment oppressed by the strangeness of your company. Including their crowns they must be a good twenty meters high, and as their feet stand on bases you can hardly reach their toes. They sit quietly there, two and two, on either side of the entrances which begin below their knees, and are all carved—

lock, stock, and barrel—out of the gray stone of the mountain. The façade is otherwise confined to the flat rectangular piece before which the colossi sit, and to a bit of ornament at the upper edge. The upper part of one giant's body has been knocked away, and the others are shamefully pitted; you can still imagine, however, what they once looked like, and the damage has not impaired their grandeur. They are very large, twelve times life size; and you can work out where the heads would reach to if it occurred to them to stand up. In the photograph, however, which we were once shown in the institute at Cairo, they were quite disproportionately bigger. Let me warn you for the ten thousandth time to beware of photographs.

The advantage of their size does the giants no good. The abnormal dimensions do not increase their impressiveness to a monumental scale, but produce all the disturbing associations we connect with real giants. The astonishing scale makes art impossible. The sculptor's power of creating form would not suffice for even the smallest format; it is confined to a tangible definition of members which are uncoördinated by rhythm. One might put up with the mechanically turned pegs instead of limbs if the anatomical points were even half correctly stated; but here everything is wrong, with the result that these giants are actually much too small. In order to carry heads with such crowns on top the bodies ought to have been a couple of meters longer. They are seated giants; they sit in a dignified fashion without any sit-upon, thanks to a childish optimism like that which devotes itself to the shaping of snow-men; they sit, because there is nothing else for them to do, and the unconscious humor which gives our snow-men wings has a most uncomfortable effect here. In spite of their solemn faces, into which a last glimmering of the royal countenance has strayed, one cannot take them quite seriously. The difference between this seated posture and that of the enthroned Chefren and Zoser and all the others who have taught us how kings should sit, points the con-

trast. Disquieting associations will crop up. Probably one can see through such mimicry better since our revolution. Possibly the stages of the world war have toughened our mistrust of any sort of parade. It is confusing to the spectator in the south of Nubia, in a temple of Rameses the Second, to discover echoes of that standing giant who once stood before the Siegessäule in Berlin and bore the features of Hindenburg.

Babuschka loiters behind; and I concern myself with her failing sense of form, and call her attention to the little figures, sheltered beside and between the turned legs, which still further emphasize the perforated character of this formation. This perforated sculpture is contradictory to the Egyptian tradition. The capacity to treat stone as if it were wax brings about its own undoing. When sculpture had not yet become an industry, it was customary, in order to economize technical effort, not to isolate the limbs completely in the round but to leave them joined to the stone background. Art benefited by this economy. The figures were allowed to grow out of the material, so that dangerous holes were avoided. Deep cutting is always the lengthiest business.

Babuschka asserts that they are effective. A work of art! Naturally four colossi sitting in a row are bound to produce *some* effect. Even four overgrown stone broomsticks would make their mark in a similar position, and with crowned heads it is notoriously a simpler affair. Even seated monkeys are fit candidates, as we see from the frieze of chimpanzees over the embrasure.

Babuschka bristles and still gazes at the photograph. If we knew nothing else of Egypt, she declares, we should be delighted. She is determined not to make the journey to no purpose.

So much the better for us that we do know more; but even if we didn't we still shouldn't be able to keep up our enthusiasm in front of snow-men made of sandstone. Even before Egypt came in sight we knew a thing or two about this Egyptian business. We really ought to have turned the nose of our boat back towards

Assuan or gone farther on towards the Sudan. But you can seldom get Babuschka away before the end of a rotten play, either; at least, she says, you ought to look into things thoroughly.

There was no answering that; and it occurred to me that everybody in Cairo had said that it was an uplifting moment when you stepped inside between the colossi. So in we stepped, and found it pleasant to exchange the blazing heat for cool shade. Inside we were struck with surprise. This cool hall supported by pillars belonged to a better Egypt. To be sure, the eight Rameses standing before the eight pillars, again colossi of a very decent height, were certainly not more beautiful than the seated giants—rather poorer, if anything—but they didn't monopolize one's interest, but contented themselves with their significance as architectural detail which one could overcome with the help of space. This proved kind. Probably the coolness struck us, and the gentler light after our open-air life of the last few days. Our eyes enjoyed the solid boundaries of the room, and the unaccustomed splendor of the reliefs on the walls heightened the effect of beauty. The great side wall to the left was particularly imposing. It was divided up into three great pictures. In the middle the victorious duel of the king with an enemy, who crumples up under the spear-thrust. The slanting line of the victor's onset and the bent knee of his sinking adversary provided a schematic drama. To left and right are two crowded scenes with the king in his war-chariot drawn by prancing horses. On the left he shoots an arrow from his great bow into the mêlée; on the right he passes in triumph through the midst of his host. The three pictures are symmetrical: on the left the king is to the left; on the right, to the right; in the middle is the fight, in which the masses storming in from either side meet with a clash. Above the threefold composition, high up, is a row of badly lighted scenes which are meant to finish it off like a frieze, but which are not really necessary.

For the first time we have before our eyes a picture-cycle of

the New Kingdom, and the novelty of it is striking. Probably Luxor and other places offer us the intermediate stages in the development. This genre was quite unknown to the creators of those visual lyrics in the quiet narrow tomb-chambers at Sakkara: neither the stormy movement nor the choice of so organic a scheme of low-relief decoration is found there. This new art is not to be attributed to the innocence of those early devotees of nature, nor to the influence of the Middle Kingdom. Severe convulsions of every sort and kind may have led to the release of this grandiose movement, and still more probably contact with other peoples. The royal archer in his war-chariot makes one think of the Assyrian relief with the lion-hunt in the British Museum. Babuschka, who is strong on history, reminds me that the lion-hunter Sardanapalus was a good many centuries younger than Rameses. For the present, then, we must trace back the change of direction in Egyptian pictorial art to internal events, of which there was no lack in the period of Rameses. Here you are never tempted to question the authenticity of a decorative legend, or, as so often happens, to approach its pathos in a sceptical spirit. The wall suits you too well to have been made for you alone, and if the wall took a different course your history would turn out differently as well. Such a scepticism is sometimes hard to withstand in the Quattrocento, when richly attired groups with comely ladies and gentlemen contributed to the surface-decoration. In front of the Rameses pictures it does not occur to you to distrust their taste. The force of the symbolism is too strong, the arabesque is too unadorned, too explicit, too exclusively concerned with its linear play and too far removed from all probability to allow one to approach it with any reserve. On the main wall with the three pictures there is no compromise between history and poetry. Poetry reigns supreme. The real king is the one represented here, and the wall celebrates his triumph.

With these wall-pictures the epoch realized an advance which marked out a worthy field for their reduced powers of formal crea-

tion. We can imagine how it happened: it is the expression of an instinct which was no longer in a position to achieve the statuesque repose of divine sculpture and had to be content with animated surfaces. Unfortunately nothing is further removed from a period led by a Rameses than objective insight into its formal capabilities; and when by some lucky chance we meet now and then in a temple some gesture that rounds off its nakedness and can span the weakened tissue, we can be sure of finding four idiotic giants sitting outside, to counteract all its happier tendencies.

When we were outside again Babuschka gave it up too; she was struck by the difference between one art and the other. The halo of the photograph was dispelled by the reality of our enjoyment of the wall-pictures. The better Rameses triumphed over the lesser one, with whom the sun made merry in the most merciless way. Incidentally, it struck me as highly doubtful whether the Egyptians themselves could have arrived at such a pictorial type. We ought to look to the early Babylonians who used motives of heroic action in relief long before the days of Rameses.

The pedestals of the two colossi flanking the entrance bear friezes with slaves paying homage which might well frame the ornamental display of the wall-pictures within: modest tapestry-strips that you take in as you go by. The colossi never once live up to their pretensions. They are wrecked at once by the insignificance of the façade which permits of no reliefs—and least of all reliefs of so clumsy a sort—and which can only hope to make us forget its destiny, which was to be a slice of cake, by keeping to the flattest possible surfaces. We felt it with particular force after our contact with the completely realized space within and increased our dislike for the founder of the temple. Naturally Rameses imagined that he was outdoing his predecessors. When Chefren wrested the Sphinx from the rock the stone of the desert became the material for sculpture and turned monumental. Any sculptor would do the same with his lump of clay or wax. Rameses was led astray by the moun-

tain, and he bethought himself of using the material as a whim: an attempt which in one form or another comes naturally to all world-rulers accustomed to the colossal, and always ends by making them look small.

There is no objection to rock-temples as such, especially in this climate; and they are in the most ancient tradition of Egypt. The first dynasties issue from the underworld; and I wonder if the shadow of the rock-temple does not hang over the whole of art down to Leonardo and Rembrandt. Creative fancy reposes in these dusky retreats, not in nature, as our generation used once to have it. Nature is the light in the distance, the boundary and the enemy, which we may not approach with impunity. Caves have something domestic about them; children make them out of chairs and traveling rugs. It is wonderful, huddling together underneath and feeling a sense of space. It begins with this sense of space. Let the outside be as it will, men cling to the inside and want to huddle together, play at school, and try their hand at communal existence. Here gold glitters, dwarfs vanish at the magician's behest, and the sanctuary envelops us. Why a façade? Every façade casts a doubt as to the magic within. Incidentally the mountain has its own; and unless you convert it completely into columns and pediment it will always look like a hole in a cake even if you plant dolls a hundred yards high in front to protect it.

Of course the façade of a free-standing space is a different matter. Does it cease altogether to look as though it led to the domestic intimacies of a mountain even if that mountain were only the cliff-wall of a street? The Greeks, perhaps, were groping after a more transparent effect, with their many-columned temples set on mountains or in broad plains; possibly they wanted complete freedom. It may have corresponded either to a more exalted spiritual tenor or a more sceptical disposition. Christianity returned to the mountain; that seems to me the most significant act of our civilization.

Mohammed informed us that Cook's steamer happened to be touching here that night in order to let its passengers see the rock temples lit up by electricity. We decided to spend the night here in order to profit by this occurrence. In the meanwhile we went to look at the other temple—the Queen's—and crossed over the yellow sand glacier between the two. The sun was grilling and drove us like lizards into the shade. Queen Nefretere contented herself with a more modest display. This time the colossi are only ten meters high; on the other hand they are not seated but stand to their full height. There are half a dozen all told. The sculpture is even rougher, but the figures divide up the surface better. Crooked strips of stone have been left standing between them; they run obliquely like the mountain and enclose the figures in niches, which helps the ornamental effect and gives at least a suggestion of architectonic construction. The interior is not up to that of the other temple.

Mohammed knows all the Egyptian divinities. As he takes me for a savant he keeps his learning for the cook, who always trots beside him in the hope of bettering himself. His poor thick head obviously has a hard time remembering the names. He wants to be a guide. Mohammed is his uncle.

Evening is the best photographer. As the shadows drove the light away the colossi lost their doll-like look and became big. The mountain drew back its outline and turned into a neutral background. A façade now came into being. The tones grew richer, closed up the holes between the limbs, and the stone became plastic atmosphere. The sky arched a grotto of stars overhead. Babuschka remarked that it didn't matter at what time of day the show began; you had to make your arrangements accordingly. After supper we went on shore again. The sand held the warmth longer. Mohammed stayed with us. First came the post-boat from Wadi Halfa; except for a motor car with damaged coachwork it had nothing on board. We couldn't see a human being, hardly even a

light; and alongside our nutshell it looked like a leviathan. Shortly before midnight the Cook steamer arrived, brilliantly lit up and carrying quantities of passengers. The electric light was turned on and Abu-Simbel was ablaze. We followed the swarm to the temple. It did not occur to one of the herd to stop a moment in front of the colossi on the façade. As they were in motion, on they moved. They found it quite natural that giants should be sitting here in front of a mountain, and all seemed to be in an equable frame of mind.

It was worth waiting for. The dazzling electric light had a remarkable effect on the interior. I had only hoped it would make the pictures clearer and was prepared to set this advantage against the tastelessness which I expected, on the analogy of the fatal effect of electric light in cathedrals. It turned out quite differently. The room, which had been only partially effective in the afternoon with the light confined to the door, now filled out into an authentic whole. Not only was there no anachronism; one could even imagine that the ancient Egyptians had foreseen the fountain of light streaming from the ceiling and had only made the sun do as a substitute. The effect was extremely roomy and modern and comfortable: not at all temple-like, but mundane and gay. Our clothes were not inappropriate. Tail coats and white ties and décolleté frocks and plenty of jewelry would have done still better; the bathing drawers of the ancient Egyptians were not in the least necessary. This actuality awakened by the light was remarkably fascinating; it was probably due to the geometrical regularity of the plan, with its massive forms, and also to the bold height. This in particular we had scarcely noticed in the afternoon. The lines of the pictures also became more resonant and the continuity of the composition could now be detected from some distance. That too was subordinate to the spaciousness of the interior and accompanied the festivities with a dance of light. At times its coloring seemed a trifle hard. Curiously enough the colossi stood out from their

pillars less than in the daytime. They played the part of caryatids, such as you find in our royal palace halls as well; they serve as masters of the revels and rise in grotesque grandeur above the whirl of the ball. The outstretched wings of colossal falcons decorated the central ceiling and stars glittered in the side panels.

The return journey downstream went quicker. We recognized few of the places when we saw them again. The yellow sand-flats by the water looked fresher. Where they are worn away remarkable cubist forms emerge; often they are like angular fragments of women's bodies. The comparison with glaciers is quite inadequate, for yellow causes an entirely different activity. We put in at Kalabsheh and visited the rock-temple of Bet el Wali. Again we found symmetrically disposed decorations with colored reliefs: sulphur yellow, sky blue, Pompeian red and a brighter blood-red. The plastic remains are worthless. The temple of Augustus near by is mainly under water and of no consequence.

Only the dam and the black gallows-crane were immediately recognizable again. The gallows beckoned to us from afar with a kind of impudent familiarity which we couldn't shake off. Little had happened at the hotel—except that unfortunately they had not been able to keep our room for us, which was annoying. The brachycephalous cook asked for something as a token of our regard for his services; and I cheerfully acceded to his wish, like a lord-chamberlain appointing a deserving firm purveyor-in-ordinary. In return he gave me a stone found in Nubia with natural tapestry patterns in the manner of Van de Velde.

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## KOM-OMBO AND EDFU

OUR parting with Assuan was a tragedy. Very likely we shall never get here again. Babuschka cried. Besides you have to get up in the night to reach Kom-Ombo in the morning. Kom-Ombo and Edfu had to be done in one day. Such arrangements are like one of those practical articles of furniture which have a drawer everywhere but no shape and are therefore nonsensical on a journey like this. It was my fault. It struck me that we were merely vegetating at Assuan—which was undeniable—but nobody could stop us, and suddenly the idea came to me at twenty-four hours' notice. We sat opposite each other like boards in the hot compartment, with its threadbare plush, and never looked at each other. There wasn't any light either. Subsequently our arrangement was abandoned, and the double event was not put into one day, for one drawer wouldn't work; and then came another dreary night.

The engineer of the sugar-factory to whom Schacht had given us an introduction picked us up at Kom-Ombo station at seven o'clock in the morning; he was a quiet and very friendly Swiss named Ganter. Kom-Ombo consists of a station, a sugar-factory, and a temple. Like Abdul, Herr Ganter sees his family only at great intervals. The only things that abound here are sugar-cane and time. A donkey trotted cheerfully along the narrow-gauge track and brought us in a diminutive Pullman through the sugar-fields

to the temple. Nearby lies the pumping-station of the factory. The temple abuts on the water like the piazza of St. Mark's. You could climb straight out of the Nile onto the terrace and reach the court of the sanctuary. This dates from Ptolemaic times; and its bowdlerizing of Egyptian forms, in the manner of the early days of the Ptolemaic regime, increased our uneasy morning mood. Besides this, Babuschka wouldn't come away and tacitly blamed me for the architecture, for whose decadence she held me responsible. The one consoling feature is the view of the river; but one ought not to come from Assuan, especially if one isn't in the mood for being consoled. A dark dining-room with dried crocodiles was equally incapable of captivating Babuschka.

Much more interesting was the engine-house of the pumping-station with its big shining Diesel engines running without a sound. The cauldrons are heated with quantities of sugar-cane leaves which burn like tissue paper. If you look into the blaze for a while your eyes are dazzled, and you are glad to get out again into a milder climate. The workmen get a shilling's wages for a ten hour day's work and manage as best they can. For one that is sent away there are ten more there. You have to know how to deal with them; they are like women, said Ganter, but immediately corrected himself and said children.

In the afternoon to Edfu. The roosting-place, larger than that at Assuan, lies on the other side of the Nile and is utterly destitute of charm. A Greek inn gave us a friendly welcome; it was a victualer's shop with a bar, behind whose cluttered array a dark-eyed sharp-featured face sized up the credit of the customers. Nearby in the dusk a winding stair, unpleasantly crowded with things, led up to two very simple and dirty guest-rooms. In one a Coptic family was sinking deeper and deeper into its own filth. The privy too, also of the Ptolemaic period and right opposite our room, stank horribly.

"Goodness gracious!" said Babuschka.

The Greek remained cool, obsessed by a time-table which prophesied no train in any direction for the rest of the day. His son, a lively young scamp of twelve, acted as waiter and practiced his languages on us. As soon as you wanted anything he dashed eagerly off and fetched you something wrong: first a glass of lemonade instead of washing water; and then, when I indicated something big, ever so big, he produced a syphon, for at this time of day he is asked only for drinks. Babuschka refused it. In such situations you ought to rise above things. I believe the washing basin was merely a farce.

Even in more attractive hotel-conditions it is unlikely that you would come to satisfactory terms with the temple. Kom-Ombo would be enough to enlighten you about the Ptolemies; or Edfu without Kom-Ombo, which perhaps would have been still more practical. Both together overdid the atmospheric effect; and I couldn't help noticing Babuschka's secret satisfaction, since she had been against the expedition from the very first. I did what I could. Without the reliefs the temple pylons would look quite stately and massive: yes, they might, only the reliefs are completely meaningless. They sprawl about on the great stones like lost souls who have missed their chance of resurrection. Abu-Simbel rises to classic heights by comparison, and Rameses alongside these Ptolemies becomes one of the Pharaohs of the pyramids. None the less there is still something left. Women can't see it; women can only see what they have lost, and are not to be won over with compromises, especially when they are obliged to get up earlier than usual. The court has breadth. I stick up for the court. The court has grandeur; besides, who knows that we shan't have a nice time this evening when we go to see the German with the big estate. Unfortunately the colonnade and pylon have become separated. The court is expansive, but has no rhythm; and when there is no rhythm, you understand, the stone remains senseless material and we remain always and ever in a bad frame of mind.

I try gently and patiently; but these degenerate pillars are fat, unapproachable proletarians with gaudy waistcoats over their paunches, and I can well believe that they are renowned for their negligence. We are what we are, each an epoch in himself. Herr Behn is Ptolemaic. The pictures on the columns and all over the walls, mythological advertisements, might have been machine-made; yet they were actually turned out by hand, carved and painted—by diseased, ill-paid hands.

These Ptolemies were the heirs of Alexander the Great, whom they glorified in Greece with academic flummery of almost intolerable sickliness. They carried on the process more crudely and helped themselves in the early days to native forms with the same impudence as our copyists of the Renaissance. At that period, however, when there was hardly any architecture left worth mentioning, they produced sculpture as beautiful as the green head in Berlin; and for all we know this repellent waste of architecture may here and there conceal reliefs that bear comparison with earlier work. The preservation of parts in a formless whole strikes us in past ages much more strongly than today when we have long grown accustomed to find pearls in dung. In antiquity, one believes, it was not necessary to bow and scrape. If ever this golden age really existed it must have been at the very beginning and can hardly have lasted more than a couple of dynasties.

They took two hundred years building the temple of Edfu, and it plays an important part in the history of Egyptian monuments—that is to say, in history as it is written by our historians. Edfu is not this or that, but the most complete temple in the land; therefore it is much esteemed by the learned and Baedeker gives it two stars. Hence the journey by the night train and Babuschka's amiable mood. What do the learned really think about completeness? It seems to me of decisive importance in the case of Diesel engines, washing-basins, last testaments and limbs, but of merely relative importance in the case of works of art; and at home we

have so far emancipated ourselves from it that nobody any longer thinks of placing Rembrandt's Anatomy at Amsterdam on a lower plane than other Dutch pictures with the same motif because it has been damaged by fire. Possibly the claims of sculpture and painting, though restricted enough, are a few miles in advance of those of architecture; still we should not give a brand new baroque church the preference over a dignified Romanesque cathedral because the latter entirely lacked its towers. What is the use of the completeness of Edfu? To make us see how the Ptolemies tackled their religious hocus-pocus or to argue back from this to earlier hocus-pocus? You have to deal with those unsavory details like the failings of your neighbors, in an indulgent spirit, so long as they do not imperil the common good. But if you have to make a night journey on their account, your tolerance dries up. A Zoser, a Chefren, our Family, and all works that help us to build up our own history ought to have two hundred, three hundred stars before we can think of giving Edfu the smallest bracket. I cannot imagine what value you can attach to judgments based on Edfu. For people who look for Europe in Egypt this value is as nothing compared with the risk of satiety. If he arrives at such completeness as Edfu can furnish, man will have reached the zero-point of observation and have converted into speculation all that he ever possessed—or could possess—in the way of an emotion. Then he might as well put on the bathing-drawers of the ancient Egyptians and disclaim his mother tongue. Just such an Egyptologist was my brother, the iron-founder, who in the middle of *Hamlet* could never stop constructing machines, with the idea of substituting mechanical means for this accursed hand-labor. Only alcohol permitted him a little relaxation; and then he became sentimental, with devastating effect.

In the evening we dined on the other shore with the German count who manages a solitary but profitable plantation here among the palm-trees. As he is an English subject the war has left him

unmolested. Our conversation was courteous and polished. He provided us with excellent Russian cigarettes from London.

The beds of our Greek were more endurable than we had dared to expect. There was an unpleasant moment next morning when one of Babuschka's rings fell behind the washstand. As I was trying to move the thing it came loose, and caverns in the style of the crocodile-chamber were disclosed. Our Ptolemaic host took us to task as in the fairy-tale, and we resolved to visit no more temples of this period.

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## LUXOR

MISERABLE alleys full of sleepy natives lead from the railway station to the Nile, but then it becomes smart. The esplanade along the river, past the temple columns to the Winter Palace is a real Promenade des Anglais. Here the boats put in; here you show yourself and do what you want, and there is always something doing. Yesterday the High Commissioner arrived on his yacht, and everything was a-flutter with gayety. It is the end of January, the height of the season. Luxor equals luxury. Should we like to buy fly-flaps too? The rascal noticed it at once; very well, here goes! Newsboys, cigarette-sellers, shopkeepers, donkeys, rubber-tired carts, motors. What luck that Abdul has just washed our white things. The Behns are there, too: it's pathōtic. A whole cavalcade of Englishmen on camels saddled in feudal style: private camels, of course. One gentleman has a dream of a turban made of cream silk with tassels. Nothing much in the way of women, however smart they may be, though the one with the green veil . . . isn't she the one from the *Cataract* with the thick nose? Merciful heavens!

Next to the esplanade, placed on lower ground, are the columns with the swelling vase-shaped capitals, astonishingly large and solemn and silent. By this tactful arrangement you are on the same level. You walk past them, follow with your eye the nice French-

woman, and the Englishman with the turban, and the general glitter, but never look at the columns, for they won't run away. Of course we shall give them due attention, for they are a different affair from Kom-Ombo or Edfu; for the moment, however, it's more amusing to flit about and play at being at Nice. Babuschka is always wanting to turn back and stop a minute or two at the landing-stage. Really the people aren't so tremendously elegant, after all. A couple or two, I daresay; but not on the whole, as we had thought at first. There's always something amiss; with luck you may find one in a hundred. Fat people can't be really distinguished: that is clear.

Behind, in the hotel, you can see nothing but the great pillars with a bit of white in between, and streamers.

We have come down to the Nile and are staying at the only hotel with a garden that directly adjoins the river. It is a lovely garden with brilliant bushy red-flowering trees, which have complicated names: a seductive red with a good deal of lilac in it, which would look vulgar in any other material. In the two trees by the way out to the Nile are a couple of little monkeys who snatch your watch out of your waistcoat pocket. Our company is mixed and the cook is mediocre, but we have got the best view of the other bank. Seen from the esplanade even the mountains have the outlines of Nice. The main mass of the hilly range lies exactly opposite; in its valleys lie the temples and tombs of the city of the dead. The stone is often stepped in parallel upright rows which resemble narrow Gothic windows and appear to open up galleries into the heart of the mountain. Rock-tombs immediately cross your mind. In front of the mountain the fertile land, here much wider than at Assuan, spreads out its many tones of green, and still closer is a very considerable beach with beautiful sand. In the morning the landing-place on the farther shore, opposite the esplanade, swarms with black dots and dashes: tourists, horses, donkeys, drivers and carts. On the days when you can go and see the tomb of

Tutankhamen there is a particular crowd. A couple of white tents stand on the sand. Houseboats and *dahabiye*s lie near the shore; at night their windows are ablaze with lights. People keep arriving. Luxor is full. We have trouble in getting used to it and wish we were back at Assuan. The only thing that reminds us of it is a *sakiyeh* near at hand with precisely the same tone. We always have to pass it when we take the footpath along the upper shore towards the esplanade. An ox drives the wheel; and you can only get past when he is at the inner side of the circle.

Our windows look on to the overgrown garden at another hotel which is not in use. Achmed, the snakecharmer, gives his demonstrations in this garden for ten *piastras* a person. He goes round and conjures up the beasts. If he smells a snake—for it seems that he tracks them with his nose—he sets to work energetically and raises his voice. The formulas are hammered into the snake; if it has any ears at all you can well believe that the military tone of command gets across right enough. In the meanwhile he gropes about in the hole and fishes out a cobra quite a yard and a half long. He lets it run where it will; then at the word of command it stands up straight like a soldier. As for the scorpion it never moved when he shouted at it, but let him catch hold of it and lay quite still in his hand like a sleeping child. Its sting was a pretty blonde color. Afterwards he laid hands on a horned snake, for which even he felt a certain respect, seeing that its bite can dispose of a bull as easily as winking. He hung it round his neck, and at his command it jumped into the basket with the cobra. So did the scorpion. Herr Alborg from Hamburg maintained that to judge by this display the garden must be pretty well full of such creatures, and that it was enough to give us cold feet, as they say in Hamburg, our room being so close. We fell into a longish conversation on this subject and on the restaurant of that late lamented Hamburg genius, little Pfardte. I dreamed of snakes that night. Our room is on the ground floor. The old walls that divide us from

the snake garden are not necessarily impenetrable, and we always sleep with the windows open. It is well-known that snakes love the warmth of the body; and in India, according to our much-traveled Hamburg friend, the only way of getting rid of these unwanted sleeping companions is to place a saucer of milk on the ground near where you are lying. In the middle of the night I got up and felt for the window in the dark, to close it; when I happened to tread on the remains of an orange I had a very unpleasant feeling.

When the snake-charmer's performances were repeated it became clear that the man always used the same animals; and now we began to abuse him. He arranged them beforehand and kept a good look-out for them. Babuschka called him a second *Jger*, while I agreed with Herr Alborg, who preferred to regard it as humbug in the interests of our safety. These discussions about the snake-charmer lasted some days. He wasn't really a *Jger*, however; they were real snakes, at least, with poisoned fangs that had been vouched for by a French zoologist from the Sorbonne, and everybody had seen the scorpion's sting. Monsieur Béranger thought it possible that the beasts had been doped with alcohol, but was by no means prepared to deny Achmed's hypnotic powers. Achmed had been repeatedly tested on clear ground; and the natives used him as their master of the snake hounds. In the garden he cheated merely for demonstration purposes and for the convenience of travelers who couldn't be put to the trouble of accompanying him on his serious hunting expeditions. In spite of the professor from the Sorbonne Babuschka refused to be convinced and Frau Alborg, too, remained sceptical. Women don't make distinctions.

THE PILLARS OF LUXOR. We pass them every day, hurrying or loitering, irritated or contented; and they stand there without bothering about us, just as on the first day. Everything else has changed, everything else talks to us. We have grown used to the flutter and glitter, and we are no longer spectators on the promenade

but flutter and glitter with it. The houses, the shops, the trees accompany us, and so, of course, do the people; and we have learnt a conversational tone in which to jest with them or share in their jests. We come here on our own errands—the donkeys for yonder and the carriage for Karnak—or quite simply to wander about, and it is all quite nice and familiar. But the pillars stand there, turning the cold shoulder to our lives, a little lower than we are; and they take on none of the patina. Babuschka thinks that that is always the way with columns that stand by themselves; but that won't work, for you have only to think of the famous group of columns below the Capitol, to which you find yourself telling jokes on your very first day in Rome. To be sure, columns can't skip or play the piano, but the immovable silence of those pillars at Luxor is abnormal. I mean, of course, the big ones with the vase-like heads. The others forming the court, the reed-columns, behave quite differently. The inaccessibility of the big ones even extends to their refusal to be utilized as architecture. The architrave on the vase-heads that might turn them into architecture is a disturbing accessory. Since a square stone contradicting their form has been placed as an abacus between the capital and the architrave the columns merely carry a degrading makeshift. You never see the columns without becoming annoyed at the useless architrave. They are not there for the same purpose, you say, without being able, however, to say what their purpose really is. They are because they are: an end in themselves. Neither Amenophis III, who put them up, nor any of his successors was able to complete the hall as planned. The columns outgrew their purpose, as one day painting was to diverge from its original intention. Expression parts company with utility and becomes an unapproachable symbol. Such a state of things is rare in building. Architecture has gone through other gestures of repudiation—menacing earth-works, defiant castles, fantastic jagged ruins on steep mountains. Compared with this indifference everything turns to mere picturesque adornment of nature. The colossi

of Abu-Simbel were large and uncouth, but simply on that account they demanded our attention, wanted us to call them colossal and then entered into agreeable conversation: human like ourselves, only exaggerated, poor devils. The two colossi of Memnon in the fields yonder, the famous oracles, still talk; and because they are oracles, they talk ceremoniously, but intelligibly. Once, we are told, one of them used to sing as well. Their lonely position in the wide plain has nothing otherwise remarkable about it. The romance of ruins breathes round them, and all the tales that travelers have told about them for thousands of years help the effect. The pillars of Luxor are inhumanly quiet. The term *colossus* applies here for the first time, though they are not really so very big. Their size does not depend on any abnormal construction but on the intensity of their abstraction. This prevents your getting in touch. There are similar pillars at Karnak. There they have been caught and tamed and built into a gigantic hall, the wonder of the world, but only after they had been hacked about and severely tattooed and castrated. Here they stand free, the complete expression of a power slowly developed through endless ages, a peak and a culmination, just as the pyramids are a peak and a culmination in their own way. The pyramid, on the other hand, is ideally accessible for all its abstractness, even if it needs the desert as a background and if the beings with whom it converses intimately are the sunbeams. Superficial relations are vouchsafed to us as well, and we make bold to take advantage of them. In those degenerate vase-pillars, on the other hand, there is something grand and medieval.

It is curious how much nearer we feel to the early temples at Sakkara. In the Zoser temple, which was built a millennium and a half earlier than Luxor, we see an eminently human and natural and a marvelously cultivated humanity in full spate. We see a way of life adapted to practical ends and to dignity at one and the same time and with every possibility open before it; and what rejoices us is precisely its objective development from wood and brick archi-

tecture to building in stone, its diligent adjustment of itself to its surroundings. They build their world out of their temple as naïvely as a family of Robinsons: not cast up on an island, however, but blessed with the good fortune of being domiciled there. A continuously equitable climate protects its stream of development and prevents wrong turnings that might lead to isolation. It is only one symptom of this process that the ribbed pillars, which are not yet columns, furnish the prototype of Doric. So near us is this first piece of history; so unapproachable, for all their beauty, remain the columns of Luxor. I can imagine people thinking them more beautiful than any detail in the older temples; the Greeks very likely would have thought so. They admired the vase-pillars, but they seized hold of the fluted ones; the one was beautiful and complete, but the other they could live with and develop in their own fashion.

Luxor and Thebes are the setting for the last act of Egyptian architecture. Their highest dreams of magnificent stone-carving are here realized. This unexampled display, which coincides with the victorious campaigns of the eighteenth dynasty to secure world-mastery, paralyzed their creative powers. Gorged, sated and denuded of poetic emotion, fantasy restricts itself to the manifold appearance of things and renounces order. The temple of Luxor becomes the scene of its distraction. Close beside that solitary double colonnade lies the court with its many reed-columns. The two types of column are opposed to each other like the Middle Ages and modern times. The proud abstraction of the vase-columns, with their disdain of structural considerations, is resolved into the type of the reed-column by an extremely logical process of rationalism which again demands that we shall revise our conceptions of ancient Egypt. Here the modern ethnologist could certainly detect the working of its mechanism. The shaft is composed of tubes which, to all appearances, could be cast or turned out of any material. Stone and stone-technique are the last that would occur to one. The tapering

tube-capital fits the abacus with the accuracy of a smooth stopper; and the square architrave rests just as neatly on top. The parts of a machine could hardly fit truer. What fills us with amazement is not the precise workmanship, which is displayed even at the earliest period, but the fact that the eye must be made to feel the need for precision. The sole problem of this mechanistic structure is to support, and this function is pursued to the exclusion of all artistic considerations, particularly an eye to proportion. Form is apparently a result of functional efficiency alone. That it was originally derived from the flora of the country is a historical fact which does not concern the eye; and what the historian might ascribe to a recollection of this origin—for example, the tapering of the composite shafts, which does not correspond to a purely static purpose—we should still describe as functional, though in spite of our sense of the total mechanism, our knowledge of mechanical detail is fragmentary and perhaps misleading. We should not be in the least surprised to see such composite shafts employed in an industrial building set out with engines and all manner of apparatus. The engineer who showed us round would take pains to explain to our lay intelligence how the choice of these rather than any other forms was determined by considerations of expansion and contraction, thrust and stress.

Both types—vase-columns and these reed-shafts—were evolved at the same time in the reign of the same Amenophis III, and the court with the reed columns was tacked onto the other part which had remained unfinished. Then Rameses, the world-ruler of the next dynasty, added the bombastic introductory pylons and the colossal pillar-statues. Such heavy-handed jokes are problems no more; they have none of the bold elevation of the earlier parts, but submit to the perfectly natural decline of world-power accompanied by shawms and trumpets. In those iniquitous days the entrance to the temple was sacked. The lower part of the left pylon

and half of one colossal statue are stuck in the ground. This looks very comic: the colossus in the mud-bath.

From here the giant avenue of sphinxes once led to Karnak: a distance which today takes half an hour's drive at least. The provincial's jaw must have dropped as he estimated the king's power by the number of the sphinxes. The arrangement reminds me a bit of those international exhibitions in Paris, though it is more grandiose and less cheerful. Near the colossus in the mud-bath the Mohammedans have insinuated a mosque shaped like a mast-head which has a South German look about it. . . . Lousy children shouted for bakshish, egged on by a dignified Bedouin who didn't see us.

The medieval massiveness of such pylons is not to be underrated, but ought not to be underlined with colossal statues. Gradually the slightest colossus gets on one's nerves.

KARNAK. When I saw a picture of the great avenue of rams leading to Karnak for the first time, years ago, I thought how wonderful, how it made one's heart leap, how one longed to be there! Something of the march past stirred one's blood and set everything with legs in motion. Now I was approaching the entrance between the rams with Babuschka. Ah, to be sure . . . the avenue of rams! The wings at the theater by daylight have a fatal effect; and that is actually what you think of here, with all those stone beasts planted there and no longer in line. The infamously restored pedestals are disillusioning; it must have been a bit different in antiquity.

Inside, the barbarism of the restorers exceeds all bounds at times and is finally at one with the destructive frenzy of hostile successors to the throne of Pharaoh who were jealous of their predecessors. Probably the effect of the great pillar hall would be better if it were still a ruin. Whether we should have called it one of the wonders of the world if it were preserved in its old state as Rameses

II. left it is another matter. The columns, especially the smaller ones, approximate to the contour of a liver-sausage. Often you get amusing diagonal glimpses, if the fragmentary windows in the central nave catch your eye, but your pleasure is never unmixed. The earlier parts are more interesting, with their collection of every sort of column-type: reed-columns with more numerous and smaller reeds, relatively better than those in the temple at Luxor since nearer to nature—or rather, to put it better, further from the machine. The obelisk of Queen Hatshepsut, blocked out by her angry brother, is graceful: the same applies to all the traces of her activity at Karnak. Seen together, however, they give no pleasure. The queer part is the one with the so-called tent-columns, whose capitals consist of upturned baskets and whose shafts taper a little too obviously at the bottom. Then there are the columns with the beautiful reliefs and the especially grand double architraves. The ceiling is painted sky-blue with orange-gold stars. There is still a temple, or temple-annex, with fine sixteen-sided columns with a solid abacus, on wrongly restored bases. We seldom get further; for we seldom divide up Karnak properly, as sensible people do in any museum, but imagine that as Karnak is a temple we must take in the total effect. In the middle there is a chapel of marvelous material—I fancy, pink granite. The chapel contains a shrine, and itself stands like a shrine in another temple, which again is part of a temple. On every side is a sacred sea of dismal neglect.

This confusion does not disturb the intellect with a gift for concentration. On the contrary it excites it like a problem of higher mathematics and exercises its highest powers. An acquaintance of mine, an architect from Dessau, who hadn't much time, explored Karnak in one morning and drew us the plan of the whole at lunch afterwards. Not a corner was missing. As I complained of the confusion he smiled as though these disturbances were purely a subjective affair and said that my interests lay rather in the sphere of literature. In the afternoon he did the temple of Luxor,

the Ramesseum and Der-el-bahri, and in the evening he recited them all by heart. Till nearly midnight he told us funny stories about Jews. At last I could stand it no more and raised my lip like the cook on our motor-boat when he wanted to mew.

THE TOMBS. The best thing about the Tombs of the Kings is the ride there. The tempo is quicker than at Assuan, for you do not ride alone and naturally on account of the crowd alone there is every incentive for being in advance of the rest. Tutankhamen's tomb is the Medici chapel and the Sistine, with a dash of Lourdes. I say Lourdes, because immediately in front of us was a very old lady in gray, evidently seriously ill, who was dragged down the narrow stairs with endless difficulty. Close to, she looked older still and kept her eyes tight shut. On her gray hat, which must have dated from the Middle Kingdom, she wore an absurd nodding bird. In the tomb they placed her on the wooden rail. She immediately opened her eyes—mouse-colored eyes with yellow specks—and a quavering sound came from her mouth. As I was fascinated by the extraordinary bird on her hat and the space was painfully overcrowded, the only thing I saw in Tutchén's tomb was a placard which told you in fat letters that photographing was forbidden. When the gray thing was carried up the stairs she quavered gently again and seemed to me to be pleased; round her eyes, with their yellow specks, dark blue rims had formed whose color appeared to have been borrowed from Tutchén's enamel. They hoisted the gray thing into the landau, and the bird shook like one possessed.

We visited various tombs and were struck by the modern tone of most of the decorations. In the later ones—for instance in the richly decorated abode of the remains of Rameses VI.—a colloquial style reminiscent of our own *jeunes* becomes common. The curved ceiling over the vault, treated as usual in black and white, made one think of English book-illustrations. Earlier examples are not so choice. The tomb of the second Amenophis, which is much more

highly colored than most of the others, seemed rather feebler in decorative effect. There are many incomprehensible motifs, stop-gap devices of an illustrator who had to replace his lack of formal sense by an insubstantial mysticism. The colored parts are unusually commonplace and the corpse lit up by electric light is about on the same plane. Over the vault of Seti I. is a long black and white procession led by a fat hippopotamus woman waddling on her hindquarters. Behind her a crocodile wanders along on its tail, rests its paws on the hump-back of the hippopotamus-lady and cranes its stupid muzzle over her head. They're all proper gods, of course. We feel about them as we do with certain bits of Ibsen which were once dramatic and have now become comic. The hippopotamus-lady's paunch and her breasts like little sausages would be something for Th. Heine. In the tomb of the third Rameses, where the color seems to be very well preserved, the electric light gave out, and in the tomb of Rameses I. I stumbled on the confounded stairs and strained various parts of my anatomy. Here we met Mr. Coolman; otherwise it was not rewarding.

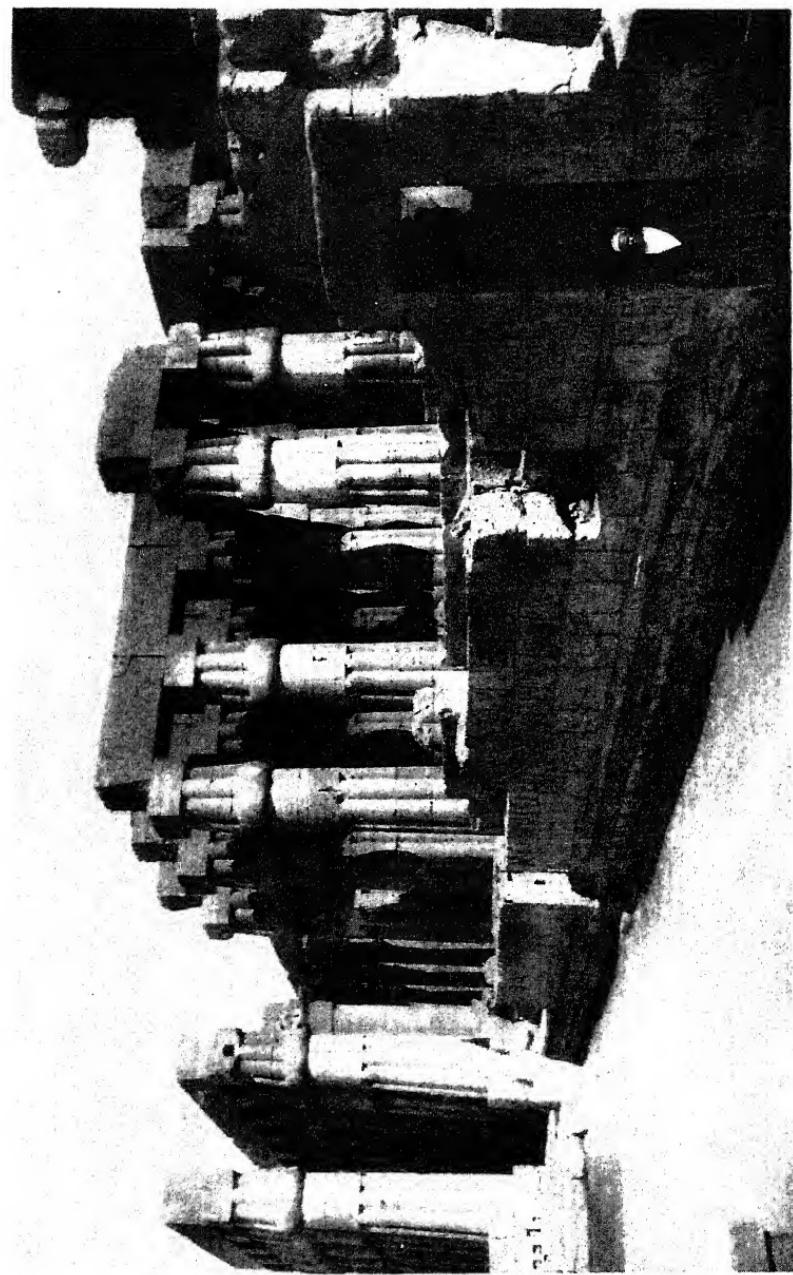
On the way home we talked of Sakkara and my bones hurt. Greater and greater crowds kept arriving and the mass streamed back. Every moment you had to turn aside to let the motors and carriages pass. This tomb-business is a heaven-sent sensation to give the Coolmans of this world an appetite for their lunch. One would like to trample them all underfoot and add them to the kings in order to be spared the necessity of giving way to them henceforth.

The tombs of the officials of the eighteenth dynasty at Sheik Abd-el-Kurna lie prettily on the hill above the Ramesseum and their more modest arrangements are preferable. Most of the pictures are not reliefs but simply painting; though occasionally, as in the tomb of Ramose, you find both techniques on different walls of the same room, which spoils the ensemble. Ramose, vizier under Amenophis IV., contrived a hall in front of his vault with tightly packed-columns of feeble construction. These have been recon-

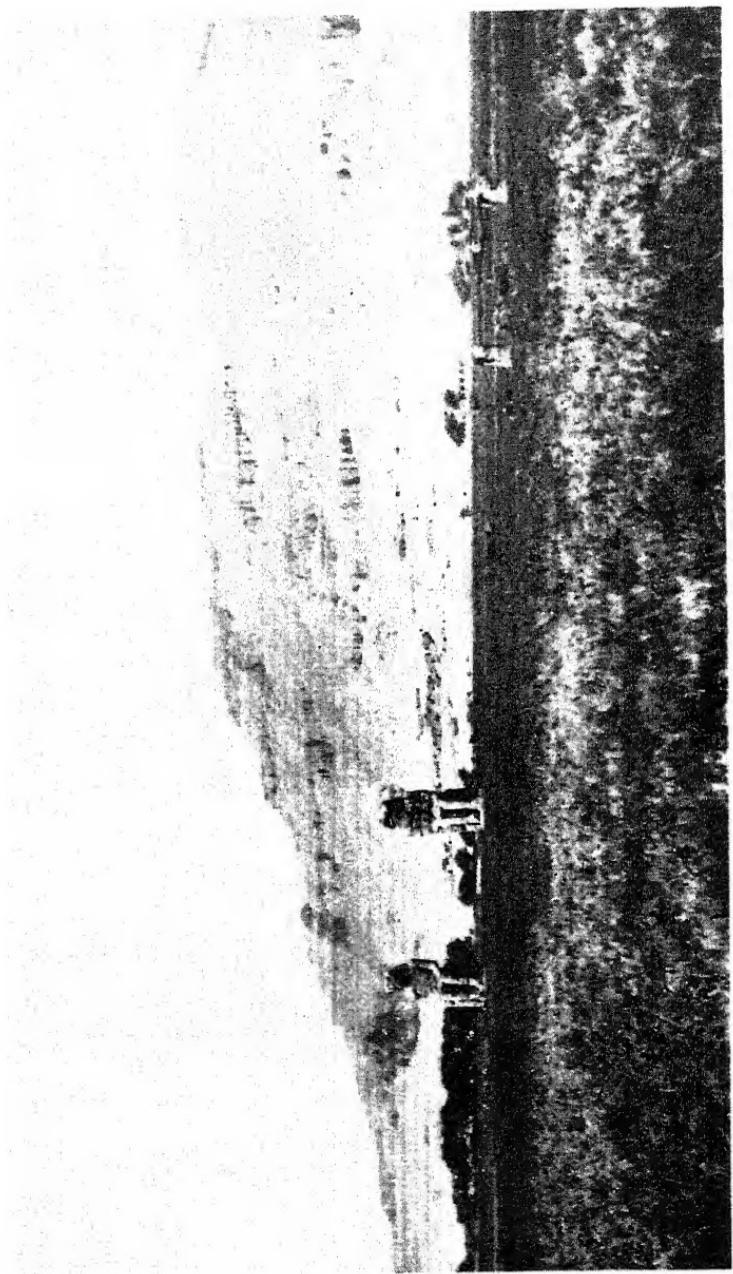
structed in an entirely superfluous way; for which purpose they have used plaited or bent wood models like clothes dummies. Ever since whenever I see a reed-column of the later period I am obliged to think of these crinolines.

There seem to have been two styles of painting in the eighteenth dynasty: one—stiff, archaic, and at times almost rustic; the other elegant and courtly with delicately articulated drawing and a tasteful palette. The chronological distinction escapes me; perhaps it cannot be determined. They both existed side by side, but the courtly style seems to have outlasted the other. The decoration, esteemed on account of its good preservation, in the tomb of Nacht, who lived under one of the early kings of the eighteenth dynasty, belongs rather to the more primitive genre. The pretty girls with musical instruments look much more attractive in the colored reproductions, which we saw all over the place, than in reality. The elegant style still survived when architecture had long since been stripped of all its charm. The tomb I liked best was that of the prince Sennofer who was in charge of the gardens under Amenophis II. The big figures have the charm of good popular picture-books. There are pretty borders with vine-clusters on the roughly carved ceiling, where the irregular ups and downs in the limestone give it the appearance of a roof made of leaves.

On the way back we looked in for a moment at the Ramesseum. One can't stand this expansive opulence for long. Rameses towers over the whole place. He and his successors have dug themselves in so thoroughly here that only furtive remains of earlier generations have survived. Rameses has brutalized Thebes. Even before him there were big buildings here, great formal symphonies which did not halt at the conventional limits prescribed for architecture. Thutmosis III., the builder of Luxor, stands in relation to the pyramid builders as Beethoven to Bach. You already feel the retreat has begun. You meet with excesses, and the rhythm runs up to a shriek. But the visionary only lets himself be carried away after a



Luxor Temple. Papyrus Pillars of Amenhotep III.



Colossi of Memnon at Luxor.

gradual raising of the temperature, and in his last excesses the whole process of development swings with him. His isolation is due not to a conscious caprice but to the dramatic development of an experience. He does not wish to break with tradition and leaves no stone unturned in order to get back into it. Rameses, on the other hand, is the romantic degenerate who finds his normal method of procedure in excesses and leaves the classic mean with nothing but a rigorously restricted pretence at mastery. He is aiming at something quite different from harmony. He wants to thrill himself and the rest with his egotistic lusts and pays no heed to the flood. It hits architecture harder than music; and the building mania of Rameses is dominated by a bandmaster who turns a concert of strings into a brass band. The rock façade of Abu-Simbel is the climax; there they have tried to convert an entire mountain into an orchestra. But this illusion, too, whose origin remained wrapped in obscurity at Abu-Simbel, is anticipated time and again by the mistakes and the strokes of genius of many illustrious precursors. The sphinx by the pyramids of Gizeh, the isolated improvisation of infallible artistry, was the beginning and a constant source of temptation. The temple of Hatshepsut, the flower in the tangle of Theban buildings, marks a further stage of the error.

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## DER-EL-BAHRI

At first I was annoyed at the fluent way in which Babuschka pronounced Queen Hatshepsut's mouthful of a name; for I found it difficult. Incidentally no one has the least idea how it sounded originally as we have to supply the vowels. Finally I, too, became fluent with Hatshepsut: indeed, more fluent than with all the rest of the world of body and stone in and around Thebes. Towards the end of our time we went nearly every day to Der-el-Bahri where the temple stands, and this coming and going gradually dispelled the whole flutter and glitter of Luxor.

Hatshepsut belongs to the good first third of the eighteenth dynasty. She was the sister and consort, pre- and co-regent of the same Thutmose of Luxor; was maltreated by him; and even after her death seems to have given him some excuse for his base conduct. She built this temple far from Luxor, a sort of Sans Souci, near the jagged valley of the Tombs of the Kings. Very likely you could draw inferences as to the queen's perverse ways from this Sans Souci temple just as in other circumstances you can detect the perversities of Frederick II. at Potsdam. Babuschka declares that there is a novel about Hatshepsut and has written off for it to the nice bookseller at Cairo. I don't hanker after it. A picture dances before me, a costume-piece in soft pastel shades, whose

subject I should like to preserve completely transposed into pictorial shape.

The temple is arranged in terraces within a large cleft shut in on three sides by the steeply rising mountain-side. The cleft is one of those curious features that may occur at any moment in this country. Here, as everywhere else in Egypt, the suggestiveness does not reside in the outlines alone, whose originality may well be surpassed by the rocky mountains of other lands, but in the singular contrast afforded by the river and the desert which gives this beautiful disposition of space. This expands here into a great natural structure open to the Nile but closed on the other sides, like an extensive court. The protected situation already invites you to repose. You feel safe here between these lofty walls; and it was natural that a queen who felt herself surrounded by enmity should here set up her special sanctuary.

The terraces bring one to Sans Souci. The last terrace leans up against the background of the great rock wall and the inside of the mountain shields the holy of holies. The three terraces were meant to lead you up to the gigantic background. This is the queen's idea: a truly romantic idea ennobled by the art with which it is carried out. All the same, one can see how this led to Abu-Simbel.

Photographs of the temple leave out a good deal, especially the damaged condition of many of its parts. Of the exterior only a small piece is actually preserved in a complete state. The rest was flung together and restored without loving care. The originals of the beautiful polygonal columns are standing only in the fragmentary side wing. But far more serious is the way in which the photographs distort nature's share. The rock wall in the foreground is immeasurably more intact than one would guess. The temple would gain by a somewhat lower power of resistance on the part of nature.

You must imagine how it once looked. Today, the restricted space occupied by the steps outside is displeasing. This is caused to

some extent by its damaged condition, for now the whole design is actually limited to the colonnades running parallel to the rocky wall, and is merely legendary in the parts which jut out at right angles to the rocky wall and create the impression of depth. The colonnades running lengthwise naturally enhance the effect of flatness and do not stand out sufficiently from their background. Nature threatens to undo the work of man. Originally the terraces were sharply defined right angles and the steps went much farther onto the level. There were the famous gardens, for whose trees Hatshepsut sent expeditions to far-off lands, as we learn from the scenes inside; and these gardens which have now vanished may have been a slight help. The avenue of sphinxes is also missing; it began on the edge of the cultivated land and led up to the temple. But above all there existed in the days of Hatshepsut the old temple dating from the Middle Kingdom, hard by the new. It has now almost entirely disappeared. The close proximity of two buildings of different ages is always noticeable; and in this case it may have increased the sense of depth as well. With that assumption, and with the most favorable allowance made for all circumstances which agreeably distract our attention from the original layout, we are still far from wresting art from nature and nature from art. I can almost believe that if every element were preserved intact the discrepancy would be even more striking.

No human building material can approach the structure of the rock-wall with its vertical cuts at equal intervals above. You can sing its praises, write epics and heroic dramas around it; but it is impossible to add a stone to this stony structure. The verticals resemble the bodies of primeval beings who rest their lion-paws on the plain and whose heads have been annihilated in some desert catastrophe. Beside those beings the terraces and trees of the royal garden and the sphinxes of the avenue can only lead a diminutive and shadowy existence; and gracefully as the temple might rise and brilliant in effect as all its details might be, it remained like a

chirping musical-box overwhelmed by the rushing fugues of an organ. Hatshepsut was captivated by the old temple which she found already standing there, but which did not seem to her to be big enough for the cleft. If the reconstruction of this temple in Schäfer's book is correct, the arrangement with the pyramidal peak as the centerpiece had the advantage over the new temple for it demanded from its situation merely protection and not a support—or only very little support—for its form. It would have told better at a greater distance from the rocky wall. The view of the valley also captivated Hatshepsut. The plain stretches away from the cleft as though sped forward into space by the weight of the rocky wall, takes in the broad luxuriant strip of green, and is checked in the distance by the handsome profile of the mountains on the other bank. One can sympathize with the queen's love for the place. The mistakes in her plan are of the same sort that Rameses made two centuries later in the rock-façade of Abu-Simbel; but they point to a much more attractive mentality. You can never accuse so charming a person of the proletarian megalomania of the Ramessides; it is rather the unreflecting delight in a happy accident, the dilettantism of a queen in a mood for play but unable to satisfy it. She embarked on her mistaken path with grace.

All objections are silenced as soon as you set foot on the lowest slope and no longer see the natural surroundings but merely the temple itself. Those two long slopes that rise gently in two stages at the center of the terraces lend wings to an organic, lucid plan and a form carefully contrived in every detail. After so many idle and unnecessary cyclopean figures it is a comfort to find pillars without colossi, cleanly carved columns without reliefs. Well-brought-up people lived here; they never tried to flummox their guests with tactless behavior. The columns, mostly sixteen-sided with square bases and caps, have that decency that the Greeks took as their model, and are simpler and smoother than any Greek detail. The exterior of the temple was white; inside the visitor was met

with a cheerful and festive display. The wall-paintings have suffered most noticeably in the queen's own day from the jealousy of her brother and spouse, who after her death removed the oft-recurring figure of Hatshepsut. It is worth noting that wherever he replaces her portrait by his own, and the context permits, court ceremonial suppresses for the nonce the difference in sex between the ruler and his consort. Where, however, the motif does not allow this change of persons, the place on the wall remains empty and erased. In the holy of holies Christian monks have done their work in later ages. If no violence has been done to them the colors in several of the rooms are so well preserved that the eye finds no difficulty in extracting pleasure from them: an esthetic pleasure devoid of an archæological alloy.

The symmetry that strikes us at Abu-Simbel was a familiar matter to the painters who worked here, and was exercised with a refinement of coloring compared with which all the Rameses reliefs are merely primitive ornament. Probably the genre had long been in existence. Perhaps it was already half-forgotten, like the style of the Empire and the Bourbons today; and some clever member of the queen's entourage—probably not a professional artist, but a courtier of taste who knew and shared the queen's likings—revived the old forms—as happens today also in lucky instances—and adapted them to this special occasion, less because of their original intrinsic importance than for their decorative merit. Such, at all events, is the impression their agile spirit makes upon us. These wall-paintings are not childishly inventive like the scenes in the tombs at Sakkara; rather, they are eclectic and in spite of this—or really because of this—they are attractive, since their eclecticism corresponds with a singularly seductive cosmopolitan existence, a kingly or rather queenly amiability.

As in Sakkara we can again detect the man behind the picture. Not only do the colors and lines please us, but also the people who delighted in the creation of these things and who at the same

time experienced the enjoyment, familiar to us, of being pioneer connoisseurs. How good this amiability seemed, how refreshing, after our hunt for something grateful to the eye among the endless distractions of Karnak! It was just as if you were at home, with your calendar accounted for to the very last minute, and some friend suddenly prevailed upon you in the midst of your harassed existence to set out for Potsdam or Saint-Cloud or Hampton Court and you left your hundred and one reviews and became for the afternoon a *grand seigneur* or territorial prince who had never in his whole life been obliged to worry about anything but making the fullest possible use of contemporary amenities. For only one afternoon, of course. It all evaporated at five o'clock next morning, and it was heavenly to return once more to your hundred and one reviews. Incidentally you would find that you would be spared quite half your labor.

The building and equipment of the temple are the chief motifs of its decoration. It begins on the walls near the first slope with rows of workmen; and the nearer you get to the inner rooms, the richer the development becomes. A superb yellow, brighter and more luminous than the yolk of an egg and something like the imperial yellow of China, and then pink lake, vermillion and blue, sea-green and white: the bright tones of Chinese porcelain. The *pièce de résistance* on the side wall of the so-called entrance hall is Horus and the Queen Mother. Horus, the hawk-god, becomes a fabulous monster of fantastic shape, and you can plainly trace the subjective interpretation of an artist who is quite free from any superstition. Body and limbs are brilliant vermillion, the apron yellow and white, the bird-head white with a blue and red and white striped crest. The color transposes the fable into the individual vision of a painter who thought only of his wall and his room. Thus you willingly let the animal mythology pass. The same vermillion recurs in the tight-fitting robe of the very distinguished-looking lady, whose flesh is yellow and whose headdress is bluish red. It must

have been a wonderful period for clothes, equal to that moment in the Middle Kingdom when the Egyptian Laliques invented jewelry for Princess Khnumuit. This picture to the right of the door had a pendant on the left which was once similar in composition and color but is now, alas, grievously damaged. The other walls were arranged in the same way. Great seated figures in beautiful colors to right and left of the door, and still-life arranged on shelves as ritual offerings. It is not surprising that such an arrangement should one day become the regular archaic convention for this kind of picture.

Then comes the hall in which the birth of the Queen is recounted. The ceiling is not supported by columns, but by eleven pairs of square pillars; and each pillar is adorned with a composition of two figures, mainly in yellow and very bright pink, a reduction of the otherwise extensive palette and likewise a reduction of the graphic form. The main wall again shows the rich scale of colors.

The corresponding hall on the other side of the slope is treated as a pendant: the same pillars again, for the most part reconstructed, and the same color-scheme, except for borders which consist merely of a narrow red and a broader yellow stripe. In such details one feels an irresistible and quite modern taste. On the walls are amusing pictures of the expedition to the land of Punt and its dealings with the people of Punt. On one pair of scales three cows, tightly packed together, are weighed against gold ingots. The humorous side of bartering was not lost upon the artist.

The three chapels of Hathor are the best preserved. Here is the final heightening of the color: a great deal of red and blue in strictly symmetrical pictures. In the second chapel, on both the main walls, we see the boat with the sacred cow. The third chapel contains a double masterpiece: the queen, this time not erased, drinking from the udder of the divine Hathor. Strange ideas and subjects emerge on these walls. Memories of antiquity and the antique stir

in one's subconscious, are rejected, reappear. That afternoon at Dulwich when I first saw the Poussin with the little Zeus grasping the udder of the goat between her legs and drinking his fill. It is not merely an association of motifs, but an association of one Arcadian scene with another, such as legends of this sort occasion, albeit this art differs from the other as much as the green garden at Dulwich differs from the sand of the desert. Fundamentally Poussin is no more unreasonable in his demands than these Egyptians, and our opposition is borne down for the same or quite similar reasons. Perhaps Poussin is a little bit harder to accept since he does not have the decorative walls of this Sans Souci to help him.

The only things left on the upper terrace are the pretty niches where statues stood—it almost puts you in mind of a Renaissance villa in Rome—and traces of walls and the two masterpieces standing free in the middle: the door frames of red granite. The second especially, leading to the holy of holies, is a jewel among ornaments: festal though always mundane in its splendor, a mixture of sanctuary and palace. On the vertical jambs the same rich arabesque of the hieroglyphs is repeated, though the carving is more delicate. Above on the granite crossbeam is a richer central motif. The color still remains in the cavities in the granite: a claret which sets off the red tint of the stone, and a bronze-green. It is a blissful comfort.

The color assists our fancy to reconstruct the temple and the history of the lady who built it. Breasted calls Hatshepsut the first great woman in the world's history. It fell to her to oppose for many years the will of her brother and husband, who subsequently proved to be the greatest king of the New Kingdom. Thutmose was consumed with an immoderate desire to smash up his surly vassal tribes and he finally achieved it in a series of glorious campaigns. Hatshepsut had other desires and wanted no wars; and although her rule weakened the land we find her a more sympathetic figure. For the sake of the people who needed a check she is represented

in these pictures as a man. Who knows what fun they may not have got out of it in the intimacy of their domestic circle. At times you fancy you can trace a suppressed smile among these columns and pillars. However she might dress herself up at the priests' desire, the building unmasks her. In this temple one keeps thinking of women; the building glorifies her sex. There is something feminine about the lyrical pictures which translate everything mythological into terms of pleasure. Similar colors occur in all temples, but never with such taste; its very intimacy speaks of the feminine, and the cult of the feminine. The whole terracing is feminine, with its garden of myrrh trees; and so is this cheerful pleasure-house of a temple, this Sans Souci. A relaxation of severe discipline is perceptible; here you feel only the well-being of freedom. You can understand how Hatshepsut numbered among her followers that Amenophis, the heretic with the feminine look and the long skull who made away with the animal-idols and set up the sun as the only god and whose name was scratched out with the same furious conviction.

A couple of hundred yards nearer the Nile, Pierpont Morgan has built a long house in a pleasant colonnaded style with the customary cupolas, for an American archæologist who is digging here. It lies cosily among the slight undulations of the ground and its tone matches the earth. For a millionaire it's quite decent. Hatshepsut must have built here. In answer to our enquiry they told us amiably that the things they have excavated may be seen any day in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

The last time we were late and it was already dusk when we passed the colossi of Memnon. In the evening they are in tremendous form.

**MEDINET HABU.** On the way to the valley of the tombs of the queens, not far from the colossi of Memnon, we passed the temple of Rameses III.; and as everything stops here, we stopped too, in

the proper way, and had to listen to one more superfluous recitation. We are closer to Edfu here, and in the presence of this Rameses of the twentieth dynasty we feel compelled to raise the pedestal of the great Rameses a step or two. Even the good preservation of certain parts of the temple corresponds with that of Edfu. The world would be richer for one single wall more of Hatshepsut's Sans Souci, and without Medinet Habu it would not be much worse off. Only the fortress-like tower has something of the character of that uneasy age. The warlike king who built so many strongholds put palisades even round his sanctuaries. It makes one think of the medieval gate-towers of Tuscany. At times the interior with the remarkable consoles up aloft, which might be Romanesque, makes one feel at home, and one expects any minute to find a drawbridge. After that it is poor.

The mountains round the valley of the queens narrow down to a crevasse between two enormous walls of rock, where one of the queens buried here might well have picnicked with her ladies-in-waiting. The painting in the tombs, astonishingly well-preserved, is more objective than that in the kings' tombs and fairly free from hocus-pocus. The fashion pictures are extremely interesting; they went to their rest *en grande toilette*. A dress with simple shoulder straps reminds me of Babuschka's blue one. Another, richly ornamented, was lately worn by Frau Henkell at the Winter Palace. These representations are not much more than fashion-plates. The women are all thin, of a pronounced Jewish type. Even the goddesses are very smart. The grandest tomb naturally belonged to Nefretere, the wife of Rameses the Great; that of Queen Titi, seriously damaged, appears to be in the manner of Hatshepsut.

Painting in Egypt remained the handmaid of architecture. Under Hatshepsut it had its chance, which perhaps lasted longer than the temple at Der-el-Bahri allows us to recognize; but the overpowering tradition of sculpture cramped it. Sculpture would seem to have

played the part that painting has achieved in our day; and in the New Kingdom it displayed a marked penchant for the picturesque. Under the heretic-king Amenophis this tendency acquired a great importance. El Amarna is an incubator of impressionism; subsequently there followed a series of reactions, as in our own painting.

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## BENIHASAN

RAMESES II., the most important monarch of the New Kingdom, had a fatal effect on its architecture. From then onwards, with certain interruptions, the decline continued. How far? The eighteenth dynasty, which expelled the foreigner and set the kingdom on its legs again, brought with it a great architectural revival whose climax was reached in the time of Hatshepsut and Thutmosis. It was a time when personal prowess stood for more than collective effort. The differences between the queen and her consort also distinguish the forms of their buildings. How far? The decline is associated with the architectural use of colossal sculpture; this began in the Middle Kingdom, but only incidentally, not as an independent cause. The pillars with the great Sesostris as Osiris in the Cairo Museum may well have adorned an architecture of pure and imposing form, though they would have been unthinkable in the brilliant period of the Old Kingdom. A great interval of time lies between this Sesostris and the king who for the first time set up figures as large as the pillars against which they stood and thus announced his greater concern for his own dignity than for that of the space at his disposal; and one would like to investigate its discords. Since complete buildings of the Middle Kingdom are rare—much rarer than those of the Old Kingdom—we decided to visit the tombs at Benihasan, near Minyeh on the way back to

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Cairo, which date from the eleventh and twelfth dynasties. At 4:25 A.M. the train arrived at Minyeh. One must expect a certain effort when it is a question of edification. Our experience at Edfu advised us not to look for a hotel. At the station there was a decent buffet kept by a Greek, not a Ptolemy. There we made tea and drowsed for a bit. About seven we took a car and our hunt for the tombs began. Minyeh produces quantities of cotton and sugar; and its half-European streets give the impression of an Upper Silesian border town. We passed columns of workmen on the way to their shift, with the same expression on their faces as you see at home, as we went through innumerable places in the rich fertile country. Somewhere or other we left the car and made our way through sugar-fields to the Nile, led by a native who hadn't a notion which way to go. We crossed the river, in company with a cow, and then retraced our steps for miles and miles. More and more people, thirsting for bakshish, kept coming up and announcing that they were absolutely trustworthy guides and quarreling among themselves like specialists, till Babuschka grew more and more embittered. As I was just about to give up the race we reached the tombs; and it became evident that two hours before when we had taken our first guide we had them right under our noses.

We were rewarded. The first tomb of all was an exceedingly comfortable room with beautiful proportions. The faded wall-paintings had little charm for us after Der-el-Bahri, but there were no rooms as attractive as this in Hatshepsut's temple. Reed-columns—two of them still surviving—supported the roof; they were remotely connected with the big ones at Luxor, and more like those we found at Karnak, though incomparably finer. The learned maintain that the type is derived, not from the papyrus but from the lotus; but this botanical distinction is not of much consequence. The form contains no trace of that objective sobriety which astonished us at Luxor. Here the column shoots up and carries, besides

the beam, the weight of its own dignity. It is much nearer to nature and yet quite unnaturalistic: an organism compacted of architec-tonic instinct, which makes you think not of what it later became, but of the pyramid-temples from which it derived. Even the plain square caps to the shafts I find attractive. The curved section of the shafts verges on the round, but retains the beautiful tendency towards elliptical form. Even the downward taper which offended us at Luxor, as contrary to reason, is here natural and charming, and the capital with its simple strip finish is much better contrived. Every inch betrays the artist's hand.

The transition from this column, with its individual character, to the tube-columns of Luxor, which are effective only in the mass, marks the difference of period, and is as familiar to us as the distinction between hand-made and machine-made.

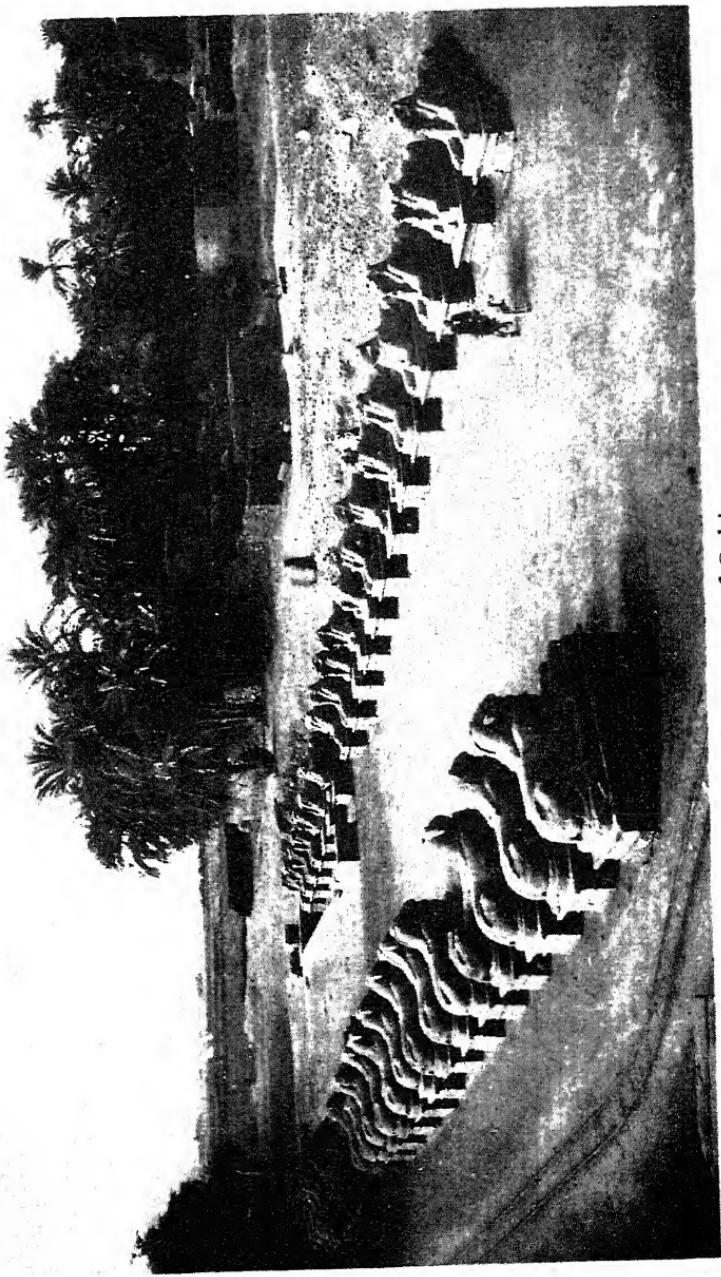
In this first tomb was laid Kheti, a provincial prince of the eleventh dynasty. In the next reposed his father. Then, house by house, come the twelfth dynasty tombs: first that of Khnemhotep, with its little entrance-hall whose roof is supported by two sixteen-sided columns. The tomb-chamber is a splendid room—splendid now only for the calculated subtlety of its proportions—with its triple-vaulted ceiling. The gentle curves of the ceiling are divided by two stone beams which rest on four columns of the same sixteen-sided type as those in the entrance-hall. In the middle of the back wall is the entrance to the chapel which once contained the statue of the departed. The relation of this entrance to the wall, like that of the chapel to the tomb-chamber, shows infallible taste. The wall-painting is again much faded. The reproductions in Schäfer do not correspond to the present condition of the pictures.

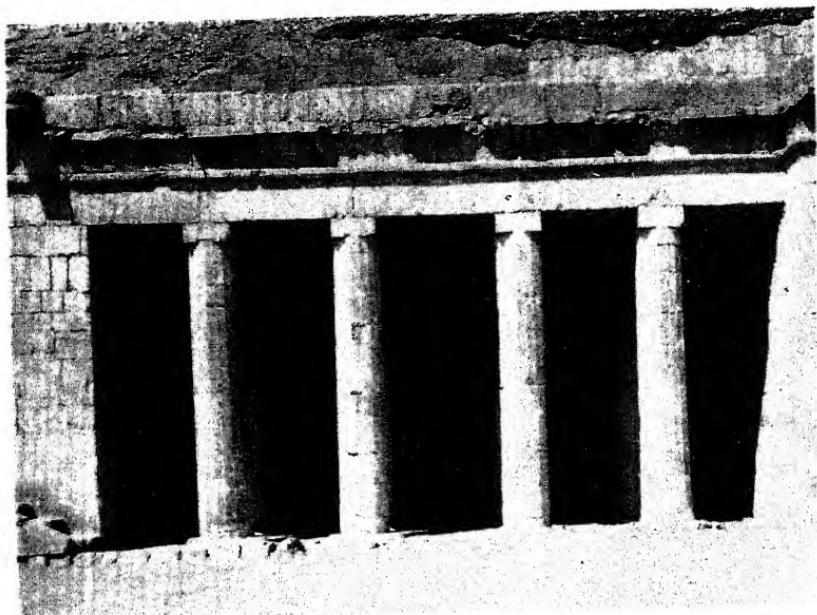
The last tomb in the series, that of Amen, shows even greater care, both in the entrance-hall with its two columns (this time octagonal) and in the way in which the entrance itself is designed. The four interior columns are almost completely preserved. The transformation of the type from the Zoser temple now comes ex-

tremely close to the Doric column. No step in the development is missing. The ceiling is again in three parts, but more richly decorated. The painting, this time well-preserved, is on a higher artistic level. Again we have rows of figures superimposed, but they are more rhythmically arranged and livelier in detail. The animals in the hunting-scene on the left wall have something of Pisanello's charm; they also remind us of many early Chinese conceptions. The decoration of the triple vaulted ceiling is purely geometric with chessboard squares, each interrupted by a stripe running its entire length. In each case these stripes extend to a larger rectangular centerpiece adapted to the shape of the vault. The color is white and golden yellow. The purely architectural quality everywhere surpasses the charm of the decoration. Walls, ceiling, columns, door, perform a piece of spatial chamber-music of the most delicately articulated form. The temple of Der-el-Bahri, of which the columns remind us, runs more to decoration; and, as is natural considering its purpose, is much more sumptuous in plan and execution. Benihasan shows us a cross-section of bourgeois life; and this bourgeois tone gave us one of our strangest surprises. The style reminds you—hold tight please!—of Schinkel. These smooth porticoes, with their invariable pair of well-proportioned columns, dispose a German to think of the master who, countless centuries later, gave Berlin a similar bourgeois tone; and the chamber-music inside the tombs confirms this impression. The world is small. The centuries with their religions and races, their kings and wars, signify little in comparison with form. Form contains an abiding principle of the conservation of energy which makes it possible to arrive at a belief in the immortality of the soul.

The arrangement of the tombs side by side forms a dignified little street, which is greatly favored by the lie of the land. The chain of hills, here much lower than at Thebes and less voluptuous in movement, forms a natural rocky terrace which juts out some distance from the massif and whose approaches form natural and

Karnak. Avenue of Sphinxes.





Der-el-Bahri. Three Views of Queen Hatshepsut's Temple.

eminently architectonic openings. Here the human hand was able to approach nature and to make it serve worthy purposes. We are a stage further on the way to Abu-Simbel, though no shadow clouds it as yet.

The mere rank and station of these provincial tombs, which chance has preserved, prevents our regarding them as crowning achievements of the architecture of the Middle Kingdom. Only the general style of the period—the idioms that occur in every building—is here discernible; judged by these standards, all the famous royal tombs at Thebes are exhibition-pieces polished up for visitors, exotic merchandise.

Shortly before our Nubian expedition an ethnologist tried to prove to me that the Egyptians had no sense of space. He was called Wilbrandt. By no means a fool; but his theories are narrow and his dialectic is glib. He wanted to ascribe the impotence of the Egyptians to their animal-pantheon, their hieroglyphs, their geography, and heaven knows what besides; and he trotted this impotence all round the place, looking for proofs everywhere. The lack of space-sense was one proof. I argued with him like a savage and talked till I was black in the face, realizing perfectly well all the time that no argument of mine would ever have convinced anybody, even a much less obstinate person than he was. For the most part my speech consisted purely of interjections, and my arguments stuck in my throat. He, on the other hand, reeled off his nonsense in polished prose, and sat there waiting quietly for me to interrupt him. Then I couldn't produce a single convincing architectural example and turned to sculpture, which they never could have produced without a sense of space. He refused to admit this analogy: regretted that he could not share my appreciation of sculpture, as he could see nothing in it but a chain of repetitions which confirmed his mechanistic theory. *Mechanismus*, it was called: German nomenclature can move mountains. He profited

by my scanty knowledge of the place and felt no compulsion to extend his own beyond the double stars in Baedeker.

Those confounded stars! It goes without saying that Karnak and the Ramesseum and the Tombs of the Kings and Edfu teach you as little of the architecture of the ancients as the Tutschen rooms in the Cairo museum teach you of their sculpture.

Actually, however, these petty little theories are no use for things like Egypt; they are only fit for intestinal ulcers or a carbuncle on the neck or for the burgomaster's wife who once suffered from them.

On the way home we met a wind and there were real waves on the Nile. We couldn't reach the flooded bank and had to be carried ashore. Babuschka rode on a Bedouin's back and wobbled perilously. The wind carved queer little wavy lines in the sand.

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## THE NEW SPHINX

*Cairo: end of February.*

THE town is in a flutter. The Semiramis has had to start an annex on a houseboat, and in front of Shepheard's you go in peril of your life. Our one-eyed Ibrahim detached himself from a knot of cookified English or Americans; and while the excited people swarmed around us, concerned about their colorful intellectual center, he greeted Babuschka and me like a brother. We must tell him all about our journey: whether we'd made use of his brother-in-law Said, who keeps all those camels and tents at Assuan, as he advised us to do. The great industrial exhibition is to open in four days' time; nobody can get in before that except him, and he is prepared, as a friend, to take us there the day after tomorrow in the afternoon and show us everything worth seeing. A lady who formed part of the crowd took possession of Ibrahim and pulled him from behind.

It is no warmer than it was in December: at least, we can't detect any difference. Not for one day has the sun disappeared, nor even noticeably diminished its strength. They haven't had a drop of rain; and the town seems not to have put off its holiday dress the whole time.

Before taking up our old quarters we wanted to spend a couple of days out at Mena House, in order to be near the pyramids and the sphinx and to enjoy the air. All filled up to the end of the

month, the manager telephoned; and we piously returned to the sisters and our loggia. In the old house, too, every corner was occupied. Apart from Dettenberg and the ethnologist Wilbrandt they were mostly new faces. The Syrian priest asked me to translate a German letter into French and promised as a reward to take us to the exhibition tomorrow. The best Syrian products are to be had there, it seems.

Meyerhof's patients have overflowed into the passage, and his little back-room is full of old Persian things he has just acquired. We refused his invitation to breakfast as we wanted to be off to Gizeh immediately.

"Don't go," he urged us.

"Why not?"

"It'll annoy you." Out of the corner by his writing-table he produced a chased metal plate of the Abbasid period, silver and copper. "You always are annoyed the second time: it's only human nature."

The silver brightened the dusty patina of the Abbasid plate; and Babuschka tried her luck at defeating his scepticism by appealing to his sense of good comradeship. The white smock again appeared at the doorway; the sister complained at all these congresses.

We went towards the Ataba to take No. 14 tram; but half-way there we got tired and chartered a car. It was evidently a holiday. Many houses were flying flags; and immediately behind Bab-el-Luk, before we passed the exhibition, we met a cart with baskets full of roses which scented the air. The triangles stood up more beautifully than ever on the horizon, victorious and exalted. We couldn't see out in the direction of the Mokattam, where the panorama unrolled itself, but only immediately in front; and although the fellow raced his engine and overtook every car we should have enjoyed going faster still. Now the Cheops stood before us in its full stature; and all our long-range notions on the subject crumbled into dust. All our experiences of the last months, all their gay color, slid rapidly away from under us. That was all

padding, noise, the litany of the *sakiyeh*, mere trimming; that swarmed all over the place, floated about the streets. Here was the immovable goal.

The car was now breaking through the dazzling throng of camels, donkeys, sand carts and spick and span Bedouins; past the flower-beds and verandas of Mena House; dashing at a frantic pace up the narrow track with an impetus that carried us at the same speed right up to the top. For the last few moments we were poised above the world amid masses of blazing blue and gold; with an elegant flourish the car landed us up under the shadow of the Cheops.

For a moment we sat there dazed; for our mad career had disturbed our vision and it took some time to get used to the blue and gold. Quantities of people swarmed round us, twittering and cracking jokes. The yellow absorbed all their fidget, however, and all their chatter. You might have fancied yourself standing on a stage in the middle of a crowd of supers who accompanied the action with stereotyped gestures. Even our own heaviness was absorbed and we hardly felt the sand beneath our feet. The best thing came first: the hill, our hill. We followed our old track, curving directly away into the desert, eager for the moment when the Sphinx would appear; and had some difficulty in moderating our steps. Probably Meyerhof's scepticism was mixed up with his incomprehensible preference for Arab stuff. This repetition after three months' interval brought us full satisfaction. At every step the scene grew more and more like a picture you already possessed and could recreate in detail at a moment's notice. Everything regained its old touch; and what once had sounded inadequate and faltering when heard alone now took its place in the whole. When you knew how everything went, you could imagine yourself as the composer of the panorama.

Suddenly our eyes were struck by a sort of paralysis, which immediately affected our limbs as well and brought us to a standstill

in the sand. One note refused to yield its expected sound, that absolutely decisive sound—the most important of all—which completed the chord, and instead we heard a creak which reminded me of the noise made by that gallows-like crane on the dam at Assuan as it came up to us. In the hollow below us, where the profile of the Sphinx ought by now to appear, a strange mass rose up with a small round shingled head set on clipped and shapeless neck. Its appearance was comic and embarrassing and even rather improper. This mass imitated the Sphinx, for it occupied the site of the old one with its head, last time we saw it, encased in a wooden scaffold. This had now been removed; and here was a new Sphinx, a monster.

"What a shame!" said Babuschka, quickening her pace. For several minutes I couldn't connect my thoughts on account of that oppressive sound of the gallows-crane. I could not get used to its relation to the old Sphinx; the brachycephalous skull of our cook on the motor-boat seemed nearer the mark.

"How dare they!" Babuschka exclaimed.

The natives were still swarming in the hole. With the same idiotic refrain they carried their baskets of sand to the trucks. The whole body was luckily free at last: this weathered, eroded, patched, formless corpse which no longer looked like a Sphinx's body at all. And in order to make this figure intelligible and certain for scientific people they had smeared the neck and the head with cement and provided the royal headdress with clean new wings. The neck and head of somebody who has had an operation, all bandaged up and plastered over: the same method as at Karnak, except that here they are not dealing with stupid columns!

"How *dare* they!" Babuschka exclaimed.

Traces of the old Sphinx were recognizable, and the recognition was as repugnant as the identification of a corpse. Perhaps it would disappear again. Possibly it was only a silly experiment, a trial, a joke; once at Heymel's one night when we were drunk we dressed

up the lifesize Apollo in a dress coat and white waistcoat and opera hat. Next morning the cast stood there in its usual state once more. And what was that? Merely any old Apollo, a copy of a ninety-ninth copy. And this was the Sphinx!

No: they wouldn't take it away, of course. It was reinforced concrete; you can build houses and engine-sheds and wireless towers of it, so why not a Sphinx?

I had lost all interest in it and we turned back. In the evening, in our own room, the old image came back of its own accord; the note gave the right sound, and the deformity was driven out. We hadn't seen it properly, or had chosen an unfortunate viewpoint, or had become too sensitive with expectation. Even Wilbrandt thought it exaggerated.

When we went there again next morning the miserable truth was revealed. They must have put potatoes in the face instead of eyes. The concrete never moved, and it seemed still worse. You couldn't see from the pyramids to the fertile land or from the hill to the pyramids. Everything had altered. It looked far worse, of course, from above, when you came upon it from the side. The profile—that first, and once irresistible, impression when you left the curving path—has now turned into a grotesque.

We used to be perfectly well aware what the ravages of time had done to the monument; but the fissures were organic and left supports on which to rest the eye, and you felt no deformation. Now it was not this or that detail that was lacking, but the organic whole, whose nerves had been destroyed. From behind the head looked like a flattened sugarloaf. Hitherto the face had remained untouched up to the ears and the headdress; but even the front view, apart from the excavated body, suffered from the contrast between the pitted and the unpitted parts. The restored wings of the headpiece called attention for the first time to the ruinous condition of the face and falsified the volumes. Naturally they will keep the proportions; that they have done, or think they have done,

in the case of the neck. The only question is: which proportions? Have they reckoned in light or air or dust? Probably they took the wings of the headpiece, which are the most important organic element not only of the Sphinx but of the whole relationship between it and the pyramids, for insignificant details of costume. Otherwise I can't see why they didn't at once work over the cheeks, touch up the nose and smear over the holes in the eyes. As seen from in front the disengaging of the body is probably more unfortunate than the patching. That too is nothing but a grotesque attempt at restoration; and the advantage that it is not irreparable does not help us to overlook the senselessness of the whole conglomeration. On the corpse you notice the attempts of earlier periods at patching. Parts of the stone which complemented the rock came loose even in antiquity. From the Sphinx you could read a lecture on monumental surgery; and this lecture has evidently been made an exercise in investigation. Now they have even cleaned the sand off the breast, which has completely fallen in and the limestone gleams with a corpse-like pallor, whereas the face still bears the dark red of its old paint. It is frightening. It is like an anatomical preparation on a monumental scale. People have gone crazy.

When the Sphinx stood up to its breast in sand it was as complete as could be, and nobody had dared to meddle with its condition. Then the fancy could readily complete the hidden body. Nature, which gradually destroyed the stone, simultaneously provided the silting-up as a means of repairing the damage. It veiled the sacrifice to inexorable decay and left only the still living portion free. Wonderful economy, wonderful piety of nature! Man's good will spoilt her game. What was left undone by the furious barbarians who once broke into Egypt, what was missed by the Mamelukes and their cannon, peaceful people have accomplished in our own day. The tragic part of the joke is that the people responsible for its undoing are there to look after the monuments. Official art-people have destroyed the Sphinx with the best intentions.

The logic of it is cogent. This mangling of the Sphinx differs only in degree from dozens of other encroachments we have seen happening. It goes with all that business in and around Luxor, with the Tutchén swindle, with the monstrous neglect of the Old Kingdom in the Cairo Museum, with the whole mentality of these people who have no feeling for works of art, but approach them with their itch for knowledge. It goes with this science which exists for itself alone, and to which the world and humanity are something alien. They have no compunction in laying hands on great things, because they fail to see their greatness. They are impelled not by cynicism or lightheadedness, but merely by the solemnity of their profession. What is to us an irreparable loss they put down to themselves as gain.

I have made inquiries. This time even their gains amount to nothing. We all knew long ago what the digging would reveal, and nobody expected to find treasure. Nobody thought it out; only routine drove them to it. Whatever is in the earth must come out.

The Sphinx always lay in a hollow bounded on two sides by rock-walls, and even in antiquity was exposed to silting-up. As long as they believed in its sacredness they were always concerned with keeping it free; as early as Thutmosis IV. they attempted it. In the Ptolemaic period barriers against the sand were built, but in vain; and the Romans closed the side towards the Nile, which was still open, with their flight of steps, thus completing the hole. Now we have the hole once more; only the Sphinx is missing. The hole compels the visitor to turn his attention to the damage and deformation. All they need do now is to build walls round the hole and cover it with glass and put up a ticket-office at the entrance to the museum.

Need they have patched it? Some say that the neck had got too weak and might have broken off. Others declare that it might have lasted as it was for centuries. The risk could have been determined;

they ought to have taken it into account, and with it the need for action. Then they should have confined themselves to what was strictly necessary: supporting the dangerous place. Enough! That would have been difficult; but it would have been far easier without uncovering the whole body. The formlessness of the corpse, when laid bare, afforded no content; and there was always the risk that the whole thing might take off into empty space.

How circumspectly the same people set about their business when they are dealing with a written text! How cautiously they take each step. No notion, however trivial, must stand alone, without citations and footnotes and a hundred ifs and buts flourishing round it: a whole network of minute links, and each one a policeman on his beat.

Here they throw caution to the winds, because they are not responsible to anybody, because they are merely dealing with art. If it had only been a golden sarcophagus of a certain weight and in good condition! But it's simply a work of art, simply the noblest work of mankind!

Wilbrandt the ethnologist supposed, yesterday evening, that grubbing things up must be a cheerful business and bring a bit of life into *mechanismus*. He would very much like to grub things up too.

The architect who works with Borchardt conjugated: I grub, thou grubbest, he grubs.

Wilbrandt thinks the shingled Sphinx isn't at all bad; you have to keep an eye on the romance of the desert. Life is more important than art.

He was loquacious. The new science attempts to get clear of dryasdust speculation, to open up new roads and to take its problems in a harmless and natural way. In one respect we are in entire agreement: in our mean opinion of the professionals of the old school.

The earlier form gradually disappears. Even when we are not

out there the note refuses to work; and when we are, we don't look at it, try to avoid it and get used to another view. Nobody can tidy up the sun.

Often one gets as embittered as an old maid whose bird has been clawed. The senselessness of the whole proceeding poisons your sap. People say it wasn't necessary. The dam was necessary and can't be made the excuse for universal lamentations; it goes with railways and telephones. One tries to include the mauling of the Sphinx among one's inevitable necessities; but one only displays one's short-sightedness—becomes part of it. The director-general of Egyptian antiquities, who has authorized this abomination, is merely a link in the chain and does his job, carries out the commands of the higher powers, and acts as a servant of progress. Besides, I am told, he is an excellent philologist.

Certainly it was unnecessary; there were other possibilities; there were artists who would rather have cut off their right hands than had a share in this vandalism. A sculptor might have been some use: even one of modest rank. The director-general would have no difficulty in finding some semi-skilled academic who would help him to arrive at some practicable compromise. This director-general is a Frenchman. Since their disagreement with England all the posts have to go to Frenchmen. With this clause in the famous treaty which ended France's political rôle in Egypt, England thought to apply a plaster to the republic's wound and at the same time to recognize the great services of French investigators to ancient Egypt. In addition it was looked upon as a tower of strength for the future of the preservation of monuments. *Prima facie* the guarantee might have worked well enough, for the French have got the best sculptors; in the circle of Maillol and Despiau they ought not to have looked in vain for somebody to help the Sphinx. Did this occur to the French director-general? Certainly not. He might as well have consulted a Paris dentist. They used a subordinate draughtsman who had done various restorations in Upper Egypt.

Before that he had been a railway employee: an excellent fellow, of course. They are all most worthy people.

This reflection called up a comical ardor within me. Since there's no doubting the good will of the French philologist and director-general, there was no question of replacing the badly-informed pope by a better-informed one. An insignificant layman like myself could never manage it. Yet if professional opinion of the better sort were organized to spread its ideas in a tolerable but serious form among the high authorities it might be possible to neutralize or at any rate to check the unhealthy state of affairs. Even if they confined themselves to filling up the hole again that would be something.

I addressed myself to all the Egyptologists and commissioners of excavations. One sat with his column five minutes away from the Sphinx, and although he was in a fever to start work he listened to me quietly. Yes: if that's what you think, we must certainly call their handling of the business a mishandling. He has promised to go and look at it immediately.

The second: Was it really so bad? Why to be sure, of course it was; and no wonder—what else could you expect of a philologist? It had been very well as it was: capital. Keep it up! The more people pitched into them, the better!

The third: Bless me! the good old Sphinx, oh dear yes. He had just dug up an arm-support of the Middle Kingdom, and now his whole theory would floor even the most obstinate sceptics. He would explain it in three words: take a seat, please! . . .

The fourth, fifth, sixth were just the same. They hadn't yet noticed; the Sphinx wasn't really in their line of interest. And they wouldn't care to make protests to the Director-General. That might lead to complications, you see.

At Nahman's I met Bénédite of the Louvre; I had once had some dealings with his dead brother Léonce. He knew what was what. It had been a deplorable mistake. He would talk to so and so about

it directly he got back from Luxor. Two days later came the news from Luxor of his sudden death.

I went to the Egyptian patriots. Their first idea was to raise the political status of a subject people, and then they started talking of economic conditions. Of art they understood nothing whatsoever. I was given an insight into the statistics of cotton exports until I felt inclined to hint how limited was my interest in such details. On the other hand Europe could hardly refuse to sympathize with a movement which was justified by its spiritual methods; and since the Sphinx might be regarded not only as a noble work of art but also as the device of Egypt, its barbarous treatment might, in case of need, be considered as a political affair, or at least be exploited as such.

The patriot regarded this point of view as highly original and warmly recommended me to go to his influential friend in the Ministry of Education, and gave me his card. The gentleman in the Ministry of Education received me with open arms, gave me tea and cigarettes, and entirely agreed with me; but the Sphinx came under the charge of the Minister of Public Works, who happened to be traveling in Europe.

It is a waste of time; and so like a well-drilled German one must regard it as counterbalancing the Zoser and the Chefren with the falcon, Ranofer and Ti and countless other works, the Nile and above all, the Sun. Without a damper it would very likely be unwholesome, for one might get out of the swim. But the price is exorbitantly high. The damper is applied to the best places. To be sure, the fine things of the Old Kingdom remain in the museum. If one had never seen the Sphinx one would not be able to compare its beauty with their utterly different beauty, to experience that miraculous intimacy between men of today and the work of men who lived in that remote and inaccessible past. It is quite a different sort of experience, quieter and more replete with mystery. The renewal of our acquaintance with our "Family" was

an expression, in a glance, of a familiarity which instantly began again at the point where it had left off when we went away. Even that second's delay which hampers our meetings with even our best friends was here spared us; the group was so perfectly urbane and considerate. It is extraordinary how one feels no sense of art or style or formal phrase, merely contact with human beings. Mystery again! I have never felt the same with any European sculpture: this human proximity without any of the aroma of the artist's personality, this objectivity coupled with such charm. Sculpture has never expressed itself in so utterly natural a fashion; it must have been as closely bound up with their lives as our writing is with ours. Yet it never sinks to mere calligraphy.

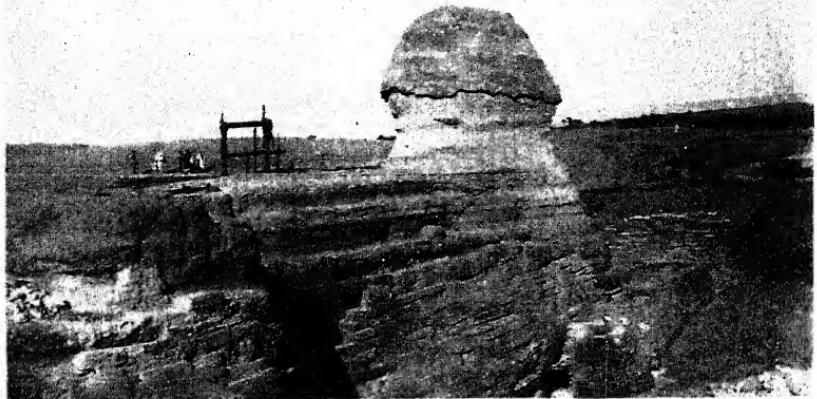
One regards such things as belonging to the museum: that is, to our artistic world, not theirs; and their transportability testifies to their value. You carry them about with you like Corot and Cézanne. If it were something in one of those many cupboards it wouldn't matter, for there would always be something to replace it. You feel convinced of it.

The watcher of Gizeh is there once for all, can be but one; and his solitariness raises up both him and Egypt. Only Egypt, the single morning of the everlasting sun, could achieve that finest stroke of collective activity, a monument to an artistic conception so remote from ours. In this place, and here alone. The Sphinx belongs to the place it watches, at the foot of the pyramids, and this proximity still further emphasizes its strangeness. The Sphinx watched over the age which possessed both the aristocratic objectivity which could turn into geometry without going stiff and numb; and that other boundless capacity, the primitive sense of child's play, which improvised in the stone of the desert that legendary creation in human shape for the glorification of humanity. It watched over a childlike race of men.

The race is there no more. Away with the watcher!

PALESTINE

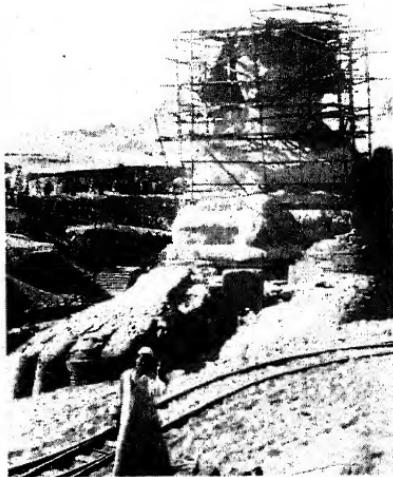




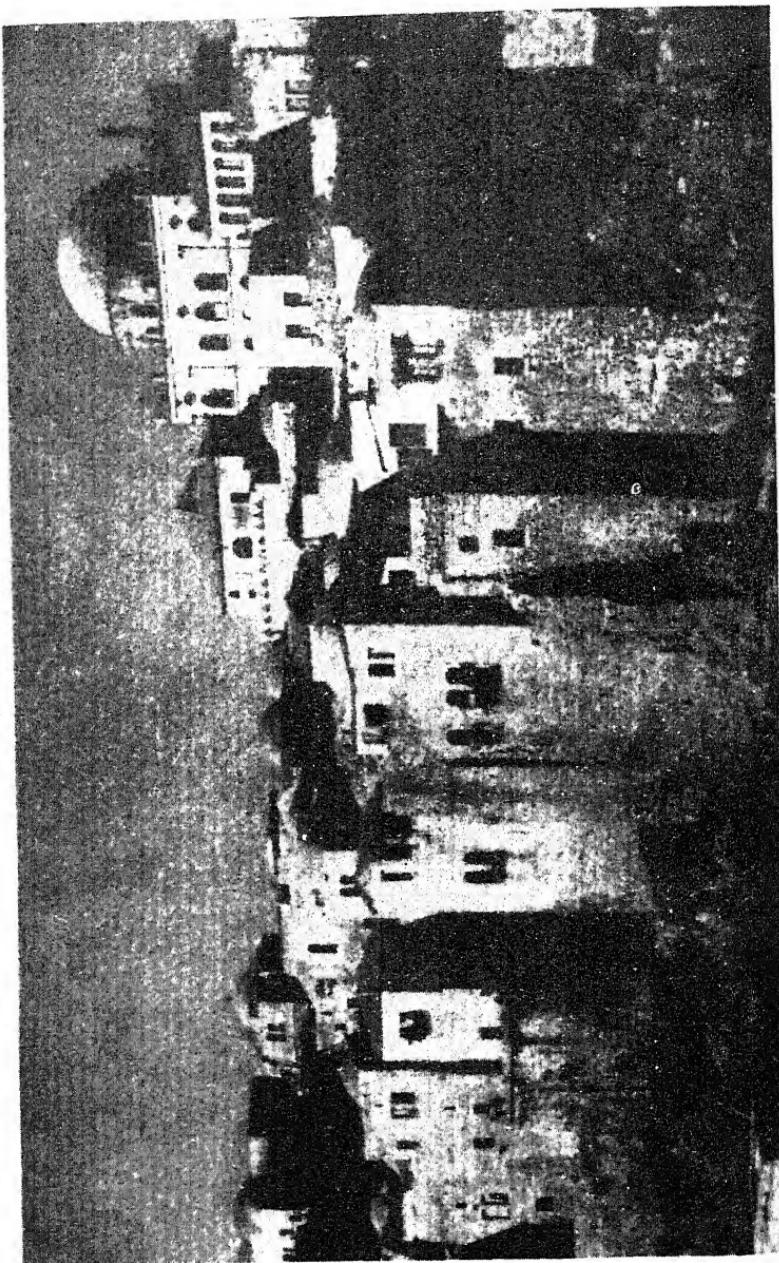
The Sphinx in its Present Condition.



Front View of the Sphinx,  
Present Condition.



The Sphinx undergoing Res-  
toration.



Jerusalem. The Old Jewish City.

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## JERUSALEM

THE morning after the night we crossed the Suez Canal began with flowers. At one station Jewish children threw bunches of anemones into the sleeping-car. Wherever a door or a window opened red flowers flew in. Later on we had to pay a shilling a bunch, though they were to be had cheaper. Bald mountains, like many high parts of Spain: lots of stone and little green. Babuschka compared each point with Egypt and didn't find much difficulty in establishing the superiority of the Nile valley. The anemones suited her.

On arriving at Jerusalem we had to do battle with Arab porters. A German or German-American or German-Hungarian with pronounced Jewish features stood by us and chucked two of the coolies out of the station with his own hands. He was the station-master, but was distinguished from other station-masters by his lack of any badge of office and his civil manners. To reach the German Hospice we had only to walk across the rails. Babuschka's temper improved as we took possession of our own rooms, though they were smaller than the ones in Cairo. The Hospice belongs to the Sisters of S. Carlo Borromeo, and the Mother Superior was once in charge of the house in Cairo. You feel as if you were still linked to Cairo; here are the same quiet faces under their white hoods. The guests are exclusively English. When I tried to intro-

duce myself at table as the custom was in Cairo and the good man gaped at me stupidly, I noticed it and felt embarrassed.

The Jewish motor-bus, which goes every half-hour, takes you to the Jaffa gate in twenty minutes. There's no trusting the Greek one. The chauffeur and all the occupants spoke German. We were all jumbled up together; I sat for a time on the fat thigh of a Jewish doctor, who directed us to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The dust in the street was stifling.

One ought not to take Palestine after Egypt, although it is practical and, thanks to the sleeping-car, as convenient as possible. Berlin would make an easier starting-point, if only because of the sergeant-major style of the churches with which William II. endowed Jerusalem. You don't feel the same as you did in Egypt; the contrast is absolute. We had lived for half a year among monuments whose form had become so familiar to us that the people who made them, so and so many thousands of years ago, strange as their religion was and impenetrable their way of life, were now as intimate with us as our nearest and dearest. Their form seems to us equivalent to a higher type of Europe. This uncommon experience is here reversed and shows its other grotesque face. Every formal remembrance of the exalted founder of Christianity in Jerusalem and the neighborhood is an infamous swindle of the most repulsive ugliness; and one takes little pleasure in participating in the culture whose documents are here. Its form denies it like a tattered coat.

I approached the famous holy places in the mood of a man who reverences the Nazarene as the most sacred, luminous, and intimate heroic figure; and boredom and impatience, shame and disgust drove me away again. Dostoievsky is right. If the Savior came again, the Greeks, the Romans and the other Catholics would not only burn him but rend him in pieces and dedicate the pieces to their idolatrous cult. No place in the world is more alien to his spirit. If nothing were there he would be better off. It would be

easier to think of him on a bare mountain side than in the church where they say Christ was buried. This church of the Sepulchre! Where there is a mere attempt at a temple-like structure, a second Christian church has been built into it, and so with churches 3 and 4. And woe betide the priest of No. 4 who wants to do anything in No. 3! A stupid mystery with dark holes and a glitter of lamps which look as if they might have come from any old bazaar, but which are of course gold and silver: a sumptuous desert of precious stones. Nowhere a place for the worshipper to meditate on the grandeur of the redemption in spirit and in truth. In the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem lies a carpet cut obliquely across because church No. 2 neither may nor will set foot upon it on the way to its own conventicle. Here at times they pray knife in hand, and Mohammedans have to keep the Christians from doing each other to death. The predecessor of the present English governor was a Jew, and as the Christians could not agree upon the management of the Church of the Sepulchre he had to take over the function.

There is one sanctuary in Jerusalem: the Mosque of the Rock. It lies in the middle of the town on the one open square, the site of the old temple, which gains in size from the narrowness of the surrounding alleys. It is a real temple: a collection of units which has become a monument. I know no more beautiful, or more beautifully situated, building. The square, like a sort of gigantic stage—since it stands a yard or two above the surrounding level—impresses us with something of the dignity of an acropolis. At the four corners are steps with round-arched arcades above them. These isolated arcades are like the wings of a theater, which perhaps the builder of the temple thought to complete. Anyhow, they are noble wings. We saw the temple first when we came on the last day of Ramadan and dared not venture on to the square; we looked down from the roof of a neighboring house, and accidentally caught the best viewpoint for the decorative effect, for from the

roof you were aware of nothing but the upper part of the octagon covered with Persian tiles. A huge, eight-faceted precious stone flashed in the sun; the real orient of the Arabian Nights, for once in a way, but even more brilliant than fancy can paint it, yet without distracting glitter. This effect is a good deal lost when you stand in the square itself and can take in the whole, for unfortunately the jewelry was never completed, but the lower part of the walls was covered with marble slabs: a bad Mohammedan mistake. The mighty octagon and the high cupola overcome it. I was prepared to beg Islam's pardon, for no other mosque displays this sure instinct in the choice of proportions and this absolute supremacy of construction. The interior revealed the explanation of its exceptional impressiveness. Under the Arab decoration lies the architecture of an early Christian cathedral that served as a pattern for the mosque. By a quick intuition I must have recognized the connection at the first glance. The dome, the lofty center, the head of the building and the square, the head of Jerusalem, is covered inside with a sumptuous scroll-pattern in mosaic, and unfamiliar sounds immediately strike your ear as if all the bells in Ravenna were pealing one Sunday morning. Islam has placed some pretty colored glass in the windows and the old parts fit in harmoniously. The rest of its ornamental additions, mainly of recent date, it must be confessed, are rather disturbing, but are swallowed up in space. Under the dome rises the old rock of sacrifice, once the middle of Solomon's temple: an unhewn stone as nature made it, surrounded by a high barrier. It lies there like a tousled prehistoric monster, dull and menacing and formless.

Jew, Christian and Mohammedan—each has contributed to the place. Its spirit embraces all parties. The temple is mightier than the church. Babuschka prefers it to the temple of Luxor and refuses absolutely to recognize the reasons which make the comparison impossible.

THE DEAD SEA. You climb down in a hundred serpentine zigzags from the bleak mountains to the still bleaker depths, far below the mirror of the sea, and fancy you are journeying to the infernal lake. The oppressive *Hamsin* increased the normal temperature and drove the fiery sand into our pores. You turn into blotting-paper. Not a house, not a soul to be seen far and wide; and the sea stank to the heavens. Now and then a motor climbed up the snaky track and rose with difficulty into the real world. Poisonous green lights lay on the mountains.

The Jordan is a narrow river, yellow and muddy, its steep banks covered with willows. Somewhere in the damp a still-life of corrugated iron and paper marked the goal of excursionists—a structure on piles made of rickety tree-trunks, a sort of garden-arbor without a garden, shaky benches and no table. The refreshments lie about on the ground: lemonade bottles, broken glasses and a derelict gramophone. Carelessly stuffed jackals and porcupines and a wild sow with gouged-out eyes sit glued to the miserable branches of the trees. A couple of toughs in sleeveless jerseys were lounging about, waiting to ferry passengers across. This is the place where Christ must have been baptized.

Old Jerusalem, with its narrow booths belonging to Arabs and Jews, is always swarming and crawling. There is a constant coming and going. The crusaders built stone arches over the alleys; you often have to pass over slippery stones through dark tunnels and subterranean vaults full of vegetables where you can hardly breathe. Babuschka discovered the charm of blonde curls around young faces with sharp noses. The curls flutter like little banners in the wind. When the faces are old and wasted with wear and tear, the curls look like silver-gray leaves growing out of blue stone.

On the Sabbath everybody goes as a matter of course to spend the afternoon at the wailing wall. One old woman whimpered as she banged her skull against her favorite place. Some howled, and others croaked huskily or lustily. Still others prayed out of

books, raised and lowered their heads in a rapid rhythm like Arab students in mosques. People of substance do it with dignity, and wear brilliant satin robes and caps trimmed with fur. Rembrandt-esque figures wandered up and down in front of the dazzling stone. Babuschka's ancestry began to tell. Only these figures really belonged to Jerusalem; and she argued with me when I refused to call the Rembrandtesque note Jewish local color, especially as the fur-cap came from Poland. Babuschka found Poland unsatisfying; Jews come from Palestine.

"But think of Rembrandt's Jews and their fur caps."

"No, they come from Spain."

"Do people wear fur caps there?"

The Jewish problem hovered on the blue horizon. At this moment it was much to the fore and dominated every one's thoughts and opinions. Every one reacts as he can. In this fatherland of the Jews I was surprised at the scarcity of their own monuments. Apart from indifferent bits of walls there was nothing to be found. At Capernaum after Herod's day they built a synagogue in the Roman style and contented themselves with introducing their own marks into Roman ornament. What was Solomon's temple like? No form emerges from the descriptions in the Bible. Old Josephus talks enthusiastically about Corinthian capitals. Did they always do as at Capernaum! A bad sign.

"Why?" she asked. That might very well be their strength. It wasn't a question of externals.

"Do you call the Egyptian way a mere external?"

"Egyptians were like that; the Jews were different. What good did the Arabs' ornament do them?"

"I didn't exactly mean ornament."

"The main thing is that the Jews still exist. Apart from their stone business the Egyptians haven't left a trace behind them."

"Their stone business . . . ?"

"The Jews must have been like that, to be able to stand up to you as they have done."

Her theory develops as she goes along. The Egyptians were visual people. If the Jews had been too, they'd have had their eyes put out. In order to produce form you must have a rest from pogroms. No art can grow up in the ghetto, etc.

How suddenly she has come out with it! And the pretty, sulky way she mumbled it, as if I were going to raise objections!

That would imply, I remarked, that art was vouchsafed only to less talented people with private means.

Nobody has even doubted the Jew's sensibility, she insisted; without the Jews we might as well shut up shop.

We! Well, we have our own ideas as to the difference between appreciating and creating works of art. I try to make her see it and fail to notice that she has stopped at a cobbler's and I am talking to myself like a fool, in consequence. The fellow is asking her to step in. Afterwards, when we have been discussing a dozen other things, she suddenly says: "It's only because the Jews have been able to resist 'externals' that they have kept anything at all."

My blood is up.

"What *have* they kept? Haggling and sharp practice! So there!"

She didn't answer, and withdrew her arm. A tiff completes the Sabbath.

If the Sisters of S. Carlo Borromeo had the Church of the Sepulchre to look after, it would all go like clockwork. They are very strict among themselves. The sister who serves us wanted to see her sick mother in Germany: her first leave for twenty years. The mother superior remarked casually that sisters can't always be gadding about. At the same time she brought Babuschka an iron tonic she had made herself, because she looks so pale. Without my asking for it they have given me a second room to work in, and I can have my tea at five in the morning. They deny themselves and are angelic to others. The sister who had had no leave smiled:

not sourly, or bitterly, or seraphically, but just as at some childish prank. They are never rancorous. Early in the morning they sing their chorale; that is the only mark of their position, and nobody but myself has noticed it. They keep a first class table. An English-woman has told Babuschka that they've got no hair. "A bald skull under that white hood: think of it!"

"I couldn't do it!" she whispered.

"But you're not a sister of the order!"

"Of their own accord, imagine it!"

"That makes it all the easier."

"No!"

She shuddered; she couldn't do it.

Werfel and Salten gave us introductions to Herr Kisch, the head of the Zionist Council. He sketched out a program. With a car you could learn something in a week about some of the Zionist settlements. I expressed a desire to see the Lake of Tiberias and some of the more remarkable stretches of country in northern Palestine, as we hadn't come here entirely on Jewish business. Herr Kisch quite understood. The chief settlements were precisely those in northern Palestine and you could combine many other interests with Zionism. He called a man in and talked to him in an idiom which I took at first to be Arabic. The man came from Berlin and was at our disposal for any purpose: not merely for Jewish matters, it was smilingly explained to us.

We came to know several functionaries from every conceivable country. They talked German to us and Hebrew among themselves. I always thought Hebrew was like Sanskrit, dead and gone. Every Jew here talks Hebrew, uses Hebrew, makes jokes in Hebrew. People who have only been here a year master the complicated idiom. It is the language of the country, it is written up over every shop and in every official notice, and the English, who are masters here, use this language in dealing with Jewish institutions. Babuschka saw nothing odd in it. To me it seemed the most positive

justification of the experiment, or at any rate its most striking side. There's no escape, even when you don't understand it. Language imposes itself. Naturally it acts as a means of communication between brothers from all parts of the world. Black Jews come here from Central Africa. A little reflection shows how striking a fact it is. The language is an administrative convenience and gives the child a name; such things are always important. Personally I should have preferred a Volapük, an Esperanto of their own, anything rather than this constant reminder of past history. There's no escape from the undertones of this means of communication. The Hebrews with curls on their temples, who have lived for ages in these dark alleys, speak Hebrew; so do the Orthodox in lilac satin and fur cap who abominate Zionism and deprecate this vulgarization of the sacred language; so do the fringeless students who have come here; and so do the socialistic workers. The language did not fall from heaven, but was always there, though sealed up in rigid forms. They have set it free: a brilliant idea, if not a genuine work of art. The original impulse of the organic sound has been preserved and is once more active. That is something more than a mere talent for organization. There's no escape from the molds of procedure.

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## SETTLEMENTS

THE new Hebrew university lies in a charming position some way outside the town on a hill near the Mount of Olives; here you have the best view over old Jerusalem. The university is an outpost in the open country acquired with the help of beneficent bequests, and has excellent chemical and physical laboratories. In the cellar there is the tomb of a high priest of the time of Herod, which came to light during the building operations. Other faculties are to be added in the immediate future.

Incidentally I asked about the students.

"They'll come."

I have heard those words used in every tone of voice from various points of view these last few days. If you ask the gentlemen of the Council about the peasants who are to settle on the land bought for them, they reply: Oh, they'll come. If you ask in the settlements, where the people still live in miserable hovels, about housing accommodations, the answer is: They'll come. First the stalls for the cattle, of course, and then the child welfare center, and then of course the houses. And a great deal else will soon come too.

Our visit to the settlements was attended by much the same results. The people to whom we were to apply were usually occupied and other guides were found for us. We asked for statistics about men, women and children, cattle and water, and whether

they grew corn or fruit. Though it was utterly unnecessary, we kept asking the same question in the same tone and assumed a weighty expression. We based our deductions not on the answers, but on the faces of our guides, according to whether they were grave or cheerful; and quite often on merely ridiculous incidents. Questions which might have facilitated or confirmed our deductions were regarded with suspicion. Always this intensive cultivation and cattle-breeding. We met neither joyous nor depressed faces; no doubt they have no time to think or feel. Apart from the children there seemed to be no idlers. The men were in the fields and the women were about the house and in the garden. The men were naturally the most surprising feature. Imagine all these intellectuals, spectacled types, that in Europe you find in offices and on the staff of newspapers and in banks. Of course they weren't all editors and bank-clerks—not a single one, perhaps—but physiognomically speaking they easily might have been. Fancy these spectacled faces with spades in their hands, or following the plough, or on hay-carts, or tending the cattle in their stalls: an extraordinary holiday sight. At first it is as incredible as the sister's smile. It's only when you shake hands that you realize the truth. Funny hard hands on thin arms: worker's hands on an intellectual's body. Peasants' bones will come. The talk you hear is dry enough: the opposite of what you expect, not at all spectacled talk but the same old story of intensive cultivation and cattle-breeding. You can't keep up with it; this dryness gets on your nerves at times.

The earth is their reality. Here in the plain of Jezreel, which stretches for miles from Haifa to the Jordan, it was all swamp a couple of years ago, and the only fruit that flourished was malaria. The hands of the spectacled people have drained the swamps and turned them into fields. Where they hadn't swamps to deal with, they had to clear the stones from bleak hillsides and build buttresses against landslides. Often you would have declared that they had chosen the worst sites in order to make their example all the more

telling. Did they think of example? What did they have in their heads?

They are ready enough to tell you about irrigation or drought, vegetables or tropical fruits, and whether it is a question of coöperative or communistic settlements. But if you come to internal affairs they always glance at their wrist-watches in just the same way, just as if they had an appointment.

Thus Fechenbach let himself go with all the more enthusiasm; he is a socialist and a Zionist, and is recovering here from his imprisonment. We made part of our journey together. Fechenbach explained to me what results the settlers have had. They could have done it cheaper. The Arabs, who are used to the climate, were ready to help them, for a slight consideration, in the dangerous business of draining the swamps. The Jews would have nothing to do with them; the land was to be *their* property.

I spent one evening discussing the subject with one of the administrative people; I believe he was called Max Levin. Fechenbach sat by. I expressed my admiration for their social morale as shown by this example. Dr. Levin said it had nothing to do with morale, merely with money. The settlers couldn't have done it cheaper as the nationalist funds at their disposal were not to be used for employing foreign labor. In any case, Fechenbach interposed, other considerations may have carried weight and ought to be reckoned with ethically. No: it was purely practical; Herr Levin took a piece of paper and did a sum for Fechenbach. It was really quite simple. The discussion amused me; and I discovered that nothing supported Fechenbach's contention better than the refusal of the parties concerned to recognize it. The Ethical party have only just arrived and can't yet talk Hebrew; in order to avoid all phrase-making they prefer to call themselves materialists.

Part of the modern settlements has been built on a socialistic basis. The other, created by Baron Rothschild, naturally has nothing to do with Marx. Native workers have turned their attention

to it, and are still so employed. The inhabitants are ordinary colonists of middle-class rank and often get rich with Rothschild's assistance. Babuschka distrusts them; for the last fortnight she has been an ardent socialist.

The new people are called Kwuzah. Everything belongs to everybody in common. Candidates have to submit to a period of severe trial, and once they are accepted they can't get out without losing their rights. It's the same as with our sisters. The Kwuzah get their land, stock and equipment from the national funds; the land is leased to them, and cannot be alienated. Everything must be paid back gradually. It seems there are already some settlements which are getting down to business without further subsidizing; but that does not, of course, depend only on the good will of the settlers.

In most others each family works for itself in the mutual buying and selling. Theoretically the demands are to be lessened, but the drudgery is perhaps becoming worse, for there are not enough of the poor to work the allotted ground. The poor will come, *will* come. I don't understand extensive and intensive economy; you can't discuss cows according to whether they produce capitalist or communist milk. People seem to be turning away from the socialist Kwuzah and taking more and more to family settlement, which agrees better with my bourgeois instincts; but I take care not to let Babuschka and Fechenbach notice what I feel.

The brightest spot in the Kwuzah is the child, particularly the quite tiny one, the suckling. This "brightness" I mean to be taken quite literally. They lie in brilliant white coquettish cradles in spotlessly hygienic rooms and are often as impertinently blond as Aryan babies. The child is the halo of the Kwuzah, the last oasis of capitalist luxury, the last religion, almost an idolatrous cult. The spot stands out too brightly from the rest of the picture. I seemed like a negro and was ashamed of my blackness. Incidentally, one

often feels ashamed among the Kwuzah; probably that is why people find the spectacle objectionable.

Babuschka, of course, is tremendously enthusiastic. The children are brought up apart from their parents, which seems good for both sides and doesn't interfere with family life in any way. The parents don't see their children till their work is done, and they are free from everyday burdens, clear of all ill-humor, purified and clean. That is how the bourgeois approaches art. In like fashion they devote their leisure to converting their family life into that edifying Platonism of the esthete who gets lockjaw in the presence of avowed sublimity.

It won't do. The devil take me if I can see it. There's something wrong here. Too bright, too senselessly bright: it's crazy! It was in the filthy hotel at Tiberias that I let fly and exposed the folly of the whole affair to Babuschka down to the last hairbreadth. It had come to a head, and now everything was at sixes and sevens.

First: When you have outsiders, whose boredom costs them a pretty penny, Europeans who are tired of Europe, Jews who have run off the rails, and then a generation of snake-charmers and dervishes persisting in spite of persecution and misery, what, I ask you, can you do with the next generation? Can people whose instincts and habits are adjusted to a European existence become orientals? Or rather, not orientals, but—what? Peasants, orientalized peasants. No, not peasants, but cockneys on the land, rustic intellectuals. And even so, is it desirable? Why? For whom and what?

Secondly: Granted that the immigrants multiply like rabbits, and that the Jews in Palestine will actually one day become an organized people. It is a devastating thought. And then the thirty-three nations who are already tearing each others' hair out gain a new recruit, No. 34.

"You challenge their rights then?"

"Oh God! their rights . . . it's the height of absurdity. The Jews a people!"

"You'll live to see it!"

"Oh, of course. What nonsense doesn't one live to see! You imagine that 'people' means something grand, and you can't see that with what they've set going they won't get bigger, but microscopic. They're doing themselves out of precisely what makes them strong and useful: the sum of their capabilities. They're turning themselves into a movie. They're dabbling with an idea which was clearly unattainable, and while it was unattainable seemed big. The ambition of the oxygen in the air to turn into a bottle of soda-water."

"Do you mean nationalism?"

"Certainissimo, to use a Spanish expression! The worst anti-Semite couldn't do them better, quite apart from the question how far the English mean their protectorate seriously. The Jews are counted out—the only ones who opposed the reaction, who stirred things up, set fire to all the dirty straw. Now they're setting fire to themselves: hurrah!"

"They never give it a thought."

"Of course they don't! The Rothschilds and the other fat chaps whistle for it, and so do the Berlin editors and producers. So you get two or three different sorts of Jews, each out for the other's blood. Which means that their one advantage over other people, their gift for sticking together like burrs, goes to the devil. Q.E.D."

Babuschka pondered on it.

"That isn't it. It sounds perfectly right and yet it's all wrong. They *must* do it."

There it rests. They must do it. It may be wrong, it may be scatterbrained, but they must do it. Why? Because. The reasons will come, *will* come. Women always hit the nail on the head. It is there: consequently it has a right to be there. Fact.

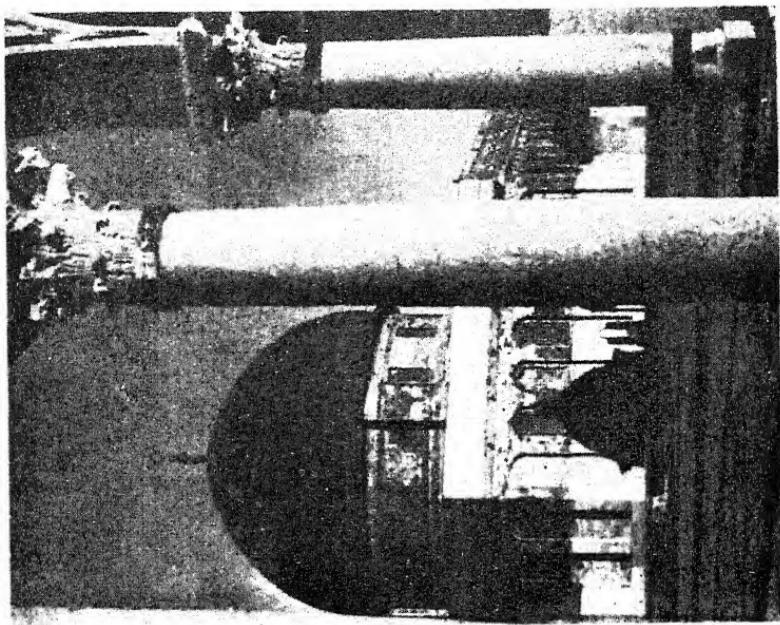
Not a hint of Egypt. Cairo lies in another part of the earth: a

pretty dream, a visit to an art exhibition, an optical experience. A journey of twelve hours is enough to veil the pyramids from view. Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom fade away. The present is right. I believe that what really puts me against the Jews is my indignation at the tourist treatment of King Zoser, at the whole tourist business, at this mixture of Baedeker and the Bible.

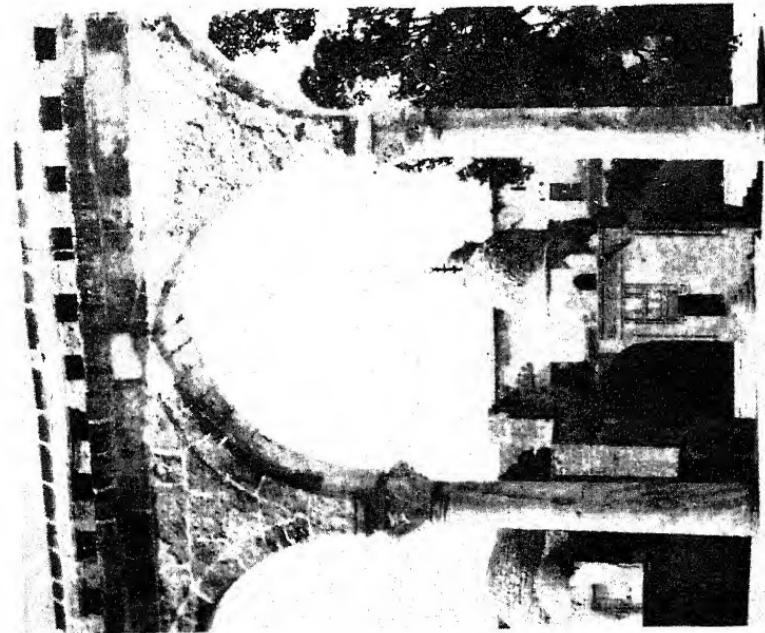
I discussed the political situation with Hans Kohn. People will always talk about quite other matters while clinging to the thing that comes next their heart. I cannot understand why they are so careful to keep the peace with the other inhabitants of the land. Today the poor Arabs are profiteering out of the money that comes into the country. The rich effendi's face is already turning sour, in spite of his having sold the land to the national fund at a stiff price. In time the immigrants send up the wages of the coolies on whose sweated labor his opulence rests. Already Jews and Arabs are working together here and there. If the workers' movement reaches Egypt and is put into practice there, the price of cotton will go up. Before the effendis let it get so far they will see their way to applying one of the approved remedies. Socialism won't be able to lay hands on the religious fanaticism of the Moslem so soon as all that; the pogrom of a few years ago was a preliminary canter.

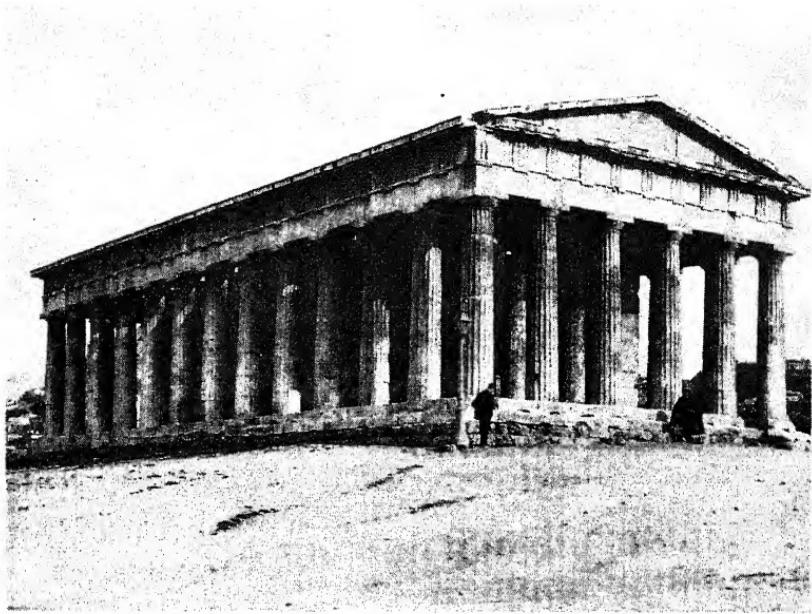
Hans Kohn declared that that was only a tiny part of the difficulties; the internal economic situation was far more serious. An acquaintance, who was sitting near by, advised me to read Felix Pinner's book, which states the most urgent problems. Then we began to talk of Dostoievsky. Pinner's book has often been mentioned to me by the leading Zionists. I have read it; it is a collection of all sorts of ifs and buts—nothing less than tempestuous. Whole mountains of formidable problems pile themselves up. You don't need to be wildly sceptical to rate the economic chances of Zionism pretty low. Why do they give people this, of all books, to read? There are dozens of treatises that set out to play upon your feelings, and succeed. Why do they direct the doubter's attention

The Omar Mosque.



The Entrance to the Omar Mosque.





The Theseum.



The Parthenon.

precisely to the most dubious aspects? How strong they must feel! Kohn himself has written on Zionism, I learn from Fechenbach. When I alluded to it he evaded the subject and started talking about the book by Holitscher, which I knew already and which exposes even more clearly the weak points of Zionism. One must give their nationalism the credit for one thing; they don't work with European methods. But can one remain master of one's methods? Can you fertilize without manure?

Tel Aviv, a new town, is built, inhabited and run exclusively by Jews. The 1921 edition of my guide gives it 3000 inhabitants; today it has 40,000, and tomorrow it will have 100,000. Everywhere they're building and tearing down again, for what they put up yesterday is too small today. Fifteen years ago the first house was the school. On a heap of stones in the main street I met the pretty daughter of Kahn, the Berlin banker. She sat there with two other girls, breaking stones. Last time I saw her she was dancing a foxtrot. In the evening we went together to the very pretty industrial exhibition. The pompous State exhibition in Cairo was nothing to touch it. A Russian Jewish company was acting pieces by Schnitzler in the open air, in Hebrew, of course.

Tel Aviv lies by the sea and is like a Californian gold diggers' town with a strikingly bourgeois element which sweetens the picture. There is a further distinction between it and American improvisations: the gold is neither dug nor extracted by interesting washing processes, but is imported by post. This distinction fills the atmosphere and gives all things and their tempo a quaint distortion. The sham look, which is pure California, becomes even more so, and the grotesque boldness of the scene suffers in consequence. It the midst of the junk is concealed an accursed bourgeois solidity, the abortion of a small town.

Close at hand lies the age-old Jaffa. The towns run together like Barmen and Elberfeld. Elberfeld is inhabited by picturesque Arabs in *abayeh* and turban, and has steep streets, often arched

over, like a quarter of Jerusalem. The effendis sit the whole day in the windy cafés by the sea and play tric-trac. In Barmen motors rush to and fro, and people hammer and plane and build. Active business men jump over the holes in the streets. From early morning till late at night hell and all its devils are let loose. Black and white, dead and living, are yoked together like twins. If Tel Aviv were finished, the contrast between orient and occident would be still more disquieting. Later on people will visit Jaffa as they would a zoo, unless the beasts break out in the meanwhile.

It takes its own course. Other towns will be founded; some on a regular plan and beyond competition with the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin. In Richard Kauffmann the Jews have a keen and gifted town-planner, and excellent architects in Baerwald, Reinsch and others. Ruthenberg, who proposes to get power from the rapids of the Jordan, is an industrial technician of the first order. And other Ruthenbergs will come. Everything is in order. Nothing civic, in the widest or narrowest sense of the word, can long be lacking. Even New York and Chicago, I fancy, with their skyscrapers and the whole apparatus of business men. Incidentally, business is confined, till further notice, to a willingly conceded, if purely poetic, license. At present quite half the immigrants go into the towns. What is the business there outside of Zionism? Those who have arrived live on those who arrive next day, and so on. What do the people with money do with themselves except build and get shaved? Petersburg and Berlin are also towns of colonists, but they possessed a hinterland which could be cultivated or industrialized. You get back to the settlers again. Every settlement on the land, no matter what sacrifice it may cost, seems reasonable, so long as the town remains a head without a body. A man in the Council to whom I outlined these ideas, remarked that not half, but between eighty and ninety per cent of the immigrants, went into the towns.

"Isn't that rather serious?"

"Very serious!"

"Well, there you are! Twenty per cent, then, go on the land?"

"At present only ten."

"Well, there you *are!*"

"But they must go somewhere. They can't get employment on the land."

This anomaly is not due to any disinclination for country life on the part of the inhabitants. The stonebreakers wait longingly for the Kwuzah, and the Kwuzah wait for them, but there's no money forthcoming. The settling of a family with all its goods and chattels costs £700; you could buy a Cézanne water-color for that. The present poverty of Europe cramps Zionism in every limb, and American millionaires are evidently not Jews. Up to the present the Zionist Council has created more than forty villages for about sixty thousand people, and most of them already require offshoots. In addition there are about sixty villages which have been founded with the help of the Rothschilds and others. Forty villages do well enough for the decoration of a tract of country but count as a mere drop in the settlement of Palestine. To double the number would take more than the ten million dollars with which Rockefeller offered to endow the new museum at Cairo, and which the proud Egyptians returned. One daren't think how many coöperative industries could be founded in Europe with that amount of capital, and how many unemployed could be settled in Pomerania. One mustn't think about it too much. If there are Peter's pence, why shouldn't there be Jews' pence too? In private, however, that is precisely what good calculators are denied. I don't grudge them their pence, but I do feel a dark distrust of their ideology; you want to turn every word round in order to get hold of it.

Tel Aviv has got everything that belongs to a real town, even labor strikes. The workers seem to be more smartly organized than they are anywhere in Europe. They have cultural centers with libraries, their own schools, hospitals and convalescent-homes in the country, but no work. As we were leaving the town a builder,

who had fallen off a scaffolding the day before, was being buried. A policeman headed the gigantic procession: a Jewish policeman, of course. Otherwise you could see nothing for the press of people. We had to stop. Order was maintained by the workers. Young people held hands on both sides of the street and formed winding chains round the body. The coffin was carried under a heavy black cloth. The interwoven hands gave the occasion more dignity than you see at any first-class funeral at home. Our car remained outside the ranks.

We have visited all the towns in Palestine, including Haifa, the most beautiful and the most promising. On Mount Carmel stands a Hospice run by our sisters. The view over the bay enraptured the psalmist. An hour to the south is Atlith, with the crusaders' castle. The great arched façade greets the voyager from France or Germany with familiar forms. Since the Egyptians were here, the country has seen many people and many sights and heard many cries of delight and execration in many tongues. A sea of blood has fertilized the oft-praised land. Of all pilgrims the crusaders were certainly the most daring. The fantastic dream of a Christian Kingdom still hangs about among these pointed-arched Gothic skeletons. We climbed down into underground vaults of gigantic dimensions. I saw spectacled faces crouching in corners and imagined I was in armor and was privileged to extol the corners and crannies of our own middle ages.

Babuschka interrupted me: those medieval chaps murdered and plundered if necessary, and their Christianity rose out of devastating pogroms. She can't stand knights.

Beyond Haifa to the north lies Akko, where the crusaders are said to have landed. Hermann Struck, the painter and Zionist whom we visited in Haifa, took us there. You travel through damp dunes right down by the waves. Struck showed us the pretty enclosed mosque-square with green painted domes and green trees, and near Akko an enchanted garden with oranges, cypresses and

dates. The cypresses were as tall as obelisks. The bundles of bananas still retained their red flowers like thick dishes dripping blood.

Haifa is the born harbor of Palestine, especially since the English might bring petroleum here from Mosul. Kauffmann has drawn an extremely clever plan for the new harbor-town. There are sources of production here which will help to swell the Zionist budget.

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## THE SYNAGOGUE

HABIMA, the Hebrew theater from Moscow, is touring here. They are giving *The Dybbuk*, a Jewish piece. We met Dr. Pick at the theater; he is a doctor whom we got to know through Levin. Dr. Pick is very obliging; and as he already knew the play he told me its contents five minutes before the beginning of the performance.

"The substance is very simple, as you'll see. Chanon, a young man who is studying the Talmud, is in love with Leah, the daughter of the wealthy Sender. Chanon's father had once been rich too, and then the fathers destined their children for each other. You understand? But when old Chanon got poor, and died, Sender, you understand, wouldn't have any more to do with it, and promised Leah to the son of a rich man. Chanon and Leah have only seen each other once, and have only said 'good-day' to each other. But the way they said it was enough for them, do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand."

"When young Chanon learns the new arrangement from old Sender in the synagogue, he falls down dead."

"Oh!"

"Yes, it moves a bit quickly; but you'll see. In the second act the marriage takes place. Or rather, it's just going to; and as the rich Menasheh is just about to throw the veil over his bride in the Jewish manner she refuses him, and the master of the feast says

at once that she must be possessed by the Dybbuk. Do you understand?"

"No."

"The master of the feast is just a person there."

"Yes, but the Dybbuk?"

"Ah, to be sure, the Dybbuk. The Dybbuk is certainly the ghost of the dead Chanon who has entered into her and from whom she can't escape."

"Aha!"

"Now in the third act with the help of the great Rabbi Esriel—a remarkable Rabbi, a miracle-worker, you understand—they try to drive the Dybbuk out of the girl. It succeeds, but she dies. That is the end."

"In a word, you have two people who can't get each other and so die in the usual way."

"Yes, that's really it; only. . . ."

"How does the Dybbuk come in? A trick, or what?"

"No, it means. . . . You must see it. I'll explain more in the interval. You'll soon see."

Dr. Pick is right: one must see it. It is amazing, how right he is; even somebody who doesn't know a word of Hebrew misses absolutely nothing. You see as you never saw before, more intensely, in all probability, than the other people in the dark auditorium who catch a word now and then and notice many interruptions which we are spared. It was enough to see the people talk and hear the tone of their voice. No doubt we missed much in not understanding the words, which the others understood and profited by; in a play of Shaw's, for instance, we could hardly have done without this assistance. Here, on the other hand, our loss was equivalent to a voluntary refusal, expressly designed to sharpen our sense of artistic perception and to remove circumstantial detail from the kernel of the treatment. Remark and counter-remark kept their value, but obtained their effect not with words but with dangling arms

and legs, glances, and a leap, a whisk, a touch, a jerk. The mouth did not so much lead, as accompany these gestures. Often they resorted to singing—or rather sing-song—and their voices were always pulling and fingering their vowels. In a Berlin production of *Don Carlos*, mouthing can produce an unintentionally comic effect, since the abstract form of Schiller's words will not be subordinated to the handling of them, but dominates it, and because this isolation of the diction exposes the performer as well. In *The Dybbuk* this mouthing gives the local color, which is not ceremonial but social, a tone of communication, vividly colored and caught on the wing. Nothing could be less festive.

In this stage synagogue you grasp the reason why the Jews built nothing, why they produced a Spinoza but no Raphael. The architecture of their worship is swallowed up in disquisition. They lounge about on benches and tables, with the Rabbi in the middle, and talk of the Talmud, dispute, gesticulate, meditate and ponder upon it. Their concept of God knows no repose. If words are inadequate, the enthusiast breaks into song. Mouthing turns into hymn-singing. Another sings too, and then a third, but never in a duet or a trio. Bach is quite a different affair. The tones combine, as in a dance which has never been danced before and suddenly emerges. Their improvising arises not from any enjoyment of music, but from the wish to break away: a response to an instinct one cannot master. They return to the spoken word with equal spontaneity and suddenly talk soberly while the echo of their song is still lingering in the corner. They are differently organized; they don't feel the gulf which for us divides ecstasy from matter of fact, and escape our ingrained pathos. They get their chants out of their sacred books, and this spiritual origin does not abate their convulsive spasms. The successful interpretation of a text gives them the utmost satisfaction; and they roll their tongues and lick their lips, as over some tidbit, and romp round the room in rapture. They dance as they talk and sing. Their limbs twitch as they

sit there on the bench; they stamp their feet and clap their hands involuntarily; and then, all of a sudden, off they go. Singing no longer answers; they must spin round and round. They catch on as the opportunity arises and leap about quicker and quicker, and their dithyrambs set the whole scene in motion. In the middle of it all something occurs to one of them. What was Rabbi Esriel saying just now? A pensive tone, long drawn out, and there they are again sitting with their heads together.

All sorts of things happen in the synagogue. People live here, and what they do outside is a mere interlude in their life inside. The temple must have been rather different, but that disappeared when the persecutions began. From then onwards they organized a transportable cult. Possibly the driving of the merchants from the temple means more than the purification with which we are accustomed to identify it. This synagogue is not so much a house of prayer as a house of conversation: a mythological coffee-house and a school for restless thinkers and poets. The crouching people might well be a band of conspirators plying their trade in a cave far from the rest of the world; the life of the band swallows up the individual. As we see it, the piece is a thoroughly coöperative affair, in which the literary effort of the scarcely perceptible author unfolds one single episode. The effect depends upon the evocation of the synagogue. This atmosphere, pregnant with mystery, might make quite other things than the Dybbuk seem possible; and the poet was only needed to grip hold of it somewhere and give it a chance to materialize. The point was well chosen. The ritual dance of the bride with the beggars becomes a Walpurgis-night in broad daylight. Brueghel's cripples and Goya's witches whirl past in a can-can. The ghost has seized the bride, in her white satin dress, and has got her by the throat. The close white satin, touched by the leprous limbs of the frantic beggars, calls a halt. Her dread at the thought of her bridal night becomes incarnate and extorts a scream from the satin dress. She thrusts the dumbfounded bridegroom aside,

and the master of the feast recognizes the Dybbuk as a matter of course.

It all comes off brilliantly and the consequences are highly dramatic; but the drama does not capture us entirely. We take in the theater incidentally while our glances flit bird-like over the wedding scene and the wings and the dark auditorium; and even take in the cashier counting the money in the box-office, and sweep over the cabs and motors and lights in the street, and feel ourselves driven on and on by the rhythm until the town becomes a streak of light and Palestine a dark piece of gingerbread.

A synagogue again in the third act. You look and look again and enjoy the play of the fresh properties. Your enthusiasm waxes, especially at the table which rises up at the back with the little rabbis chattering and mouthing and the aged chief rabbi across the front in a mask by Chagall. Their singing rises a third time, and their tears and laughter, and their dancing. That affects us too; the expelling of the Dybbuk goes a bit wrong and is of less importance. It is marvelous when the fabulous old monster in the Chagall mask embarks upon his slow triumphal dance over the vanquished Dybbuk, as though the synagogue were triumphing over human limitations. The whole theater rocks with him. The square, with its trams and lights, the whole town becomes a synagogue. The bride alone refuses to stir: the one thing in the world that will not rock with joy. She runs round in circles like a little dog with a bee in her ear: squeaks and yaps and dies like a poor wretch of a dog. Sada Yacco, the Japanese, who brought her company to Paris in 1900, squeaked in just the same way. The rhythm comes from the East.

The play is over, and now it is beginnig to work upon me. The people who are getting up to go home spoil it. "Mad!" I remark to a gentleman standing by, for the sake of something to say.

He nods obligingly and mutters something under his breath. People clap a bit, and one couple, who don't feel embarrassed,

remain standing and cheer. On the whole, however, the spectators try to get away quickly. Several look like people whom you have caught unawares at a family scene; the situation is not exactly compromising, but uncomfortable.

In his amiable way Dr. Pick discourses upon the actress so-and-so. The producer died, unfortunately, some years ago; he was a pupil of Stanislavsky's, a Russian, not a Jew, and very gifted. He insists on my going ahead at the gate, where there is a crowd. The legend is historical.

"Of course," I reply, and try to add a word or two, but people come between us.

Probably it is all historical, or would they still be able to mouth it like that? Probably they feel about the *Dybbuk* as we do about Charlemagne.

Pick is enthusiastic. Such things still go on, even in Berlin, in the Grenadierstrasse, not to mention Jerusalem. Poetry and the production of the Russian, whose death we deplore, make it into a work of art; the synagogue, at all events, is a raw product. *Auf Wiedersehen!*

A raw product? That may have unexpected consequences. We are all poets, and we shall soon be learning management at our dancing-classes. We shall run short of raw-products. The language of these incomparable Russians, which we couldn't understand either, envisages a heap of possibilities in the *Dybbuk*. It would not be so easy for us to transplant Russian comedy; though at a pinch it might be worth considering. But the medium of these Jews, their language which so readily turns to dance and song, their mouthing we shall never replace, any more than Rembrandt's chiaroscuro. There was a man who understood his medium.

We can guess where their rhythm comes from. What they produce is not the work of the insignificant poet, but the house of prayer. Every one recognizes their fund of energy which has withstood persecution, exile, and massacre on innumerable occasions,

and every one wonders where they learned how to cling together like burrs and rise above the others who had compelled them to crawl about in caves. It is the synagogue that stands behind them; nothing replaces this stimulant, this fund of energy. But does it still exist? In producing the house of prayer on the stage, they are getting further away from it. The ghettos are disappearing. Russia no longer provides pogroms for them, but places the proper modern producer at their disposal. It is a question whether the abandoning of their oriental Golgotha, the sense of measureless anguish, the breeding-place of immeasurable fertility, may not prove the solution of the Jewish question: that is to say, the dissolution of the Jews.

Can they discover the substitute for the synagogue they are searching for in Palestine? The people on the stage deny it with every limb, and drunkards tell the truth. Zionism is a poetic fact, a theatrical production. The Jews who are establishing themselves as peasants, building towns and founding a State are abandoning the raw-product. They are keen on an idea and fight for it with exemplary energy and political circumspection, but they are hampered by the very same systematic display. The settlers bridle the word that in the synagogue turns into dance or song. They are modern people, drenched by the great machine that washes all of us, the machine that works far more effectively than anti-Semitism for the extermination of the Jews. The mouthing belongs to the past. As recompense, they may now develop some of the artistic energy that hitherto we have been accustomed to deny them.

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## THE STRUGGLE

**B**ACK to the settlements. It is absurd; for one visit is quite enough for the superficial interest of the tourist. More and more spectacled people with dung-forks and ploughs: the newest version of good old Papa Millet's Sower, with a dash of Vincent van Gogh thrown in. I have tried to appreciate the new sentiment which justified their burdens and which might be expressed in terms of Vincent's palette; but I haven't been able to get it. One has to live and work with them; Jews are not visual people.

They are through with Zionism, which, whether by choice or no, remains in the towns. The fiction lasts, even while they sweat blood; the romantic contrast enlivens the stonebreaker's lot. To be sure, there are stones to break; but after that there's something else. After work you go to town, talk to this or that friend, get clean. Look at me, town; I'm a stonebreaker. There's still the fox-trot. In town the prospect of change and recreation is always a help.

The test lies in the settlements. Any Jew has a better chance in Berlin or Paris or anywhere rather than in Palestine. For the sake of Zionism he is prepared to overlook it; they're always doing something for it, giving their famous tithes. Even if they give half, they will still be able to indulge in their old flights of fancy. The Kwuzah has put a stop to this dance. In socialist settlements individual luck is excluded, both in theory and in practice. That is

the point. The hardship doesn't lie in manual work, as visual people suppose who have no idea what the other race is like. The limbs do what you will them to do; perhaps, too, they obey a Jew more readily than us. Productivity is another story and does not enter into it since there is no comparison with the peasant born and bred. But the monotony of the program is the principal hindrance to the possibility of getting on quicker than your neighbor; and then the loss of opportunity, the dismissal of every egoistic fancy. There are no stupid and no quick people any more: merely bodies. Machines, of course, are of some assistance; nothing is less like these modern settlers than to disdain mechanical aid. But it doesn't make things easier. Machines only underline once more the mechanical nature of the whole proceeding. By all means, if it were possible to invent machines; if only there were space and time for speculation! What are the spectacled people doing with their spectacles? Where is their emotion carrying them? I was astonished at the sight of an open book in the window of a hovel.

Things are not so bad, people say. The Germans say so, and so do the English. On any drill-ground or parade this sport would be a pleasure. The Jew has chosen the very scourge whose sting he alone can appreciate.

Many of these people have, or had, the power of establishing themselves spiritually; and for this reason it need not be cultivated. You may find plenty of Spinoza faces engaged in petty huckstering in the byways of Jerusalem, yet knowing all the while what an idea can do. Very likely the people of Jerusalem are no better endowed in this respect than the settlers, but among the Kwuzah they would prefer—and rightly—to feel they were mortifying the flesh. They voluntarily abstain from thinking: from real thinking, the very fabric of solitude, the refuge. That is just the reason why they are Zionists, people say; but the chief thing is what they say themselves, which is just the kind of thing people always say before they know the facts. The Kwuzah has repudiated religion

and nationalism; and it is hard to see what Zionist tenets these atheists and communists have retained. Are they fighting for Judaism? I should have thought it was for the disintegration of the Jews.

Kwuzah and a profession of the Jewish faith cancel each other. That is logical, and a historic fact into the bargain. The professing believers who took sides with the first communist elements, so far as is historically recorded, were Christians. Harnack has described them and collected what documentary evidence exists as to their rules. There we may trace the original germ of the Kwuzah. It was easier for these first communists, for the savior whose bidding they obeyed was far above them. Their communism was acceptable to their God and earned them life everlasting. It is easier for our Sisters; the mother of God kisses their shaven heads and sheds a smile over their soul. To the people in the Kwuzah it is not given to look for miracles in the midst of their stone-carrying and draining. They want to be merely human: a frightful thought.

That is just the reason why they are communists, people say. One can find their like at home and everywhere. You see partisans and theorists before your eyes, arguing and striving and seeing everything through their theories, on which they stand. They are on an island, without any audience or opposition or support except themselves. Their practices, even were they less rigorous, would have all the disadvantages of simple realism. How strong their dream must be! Not the dream that drove them here and was dissipated on the day of their coming, but the new dream which is dreamed afresh in the midst of tinder and wreckage, loneliness, dung and stones, sweat and aching muscles! Does each man and woman find a friend in their settlement? By rights, of course, they all hang together. By rights they all love one another like theoretical brothers and sisters. As long as they don't fall foul of each other, they are perfect saints. I can't see it. Dear tightrope-dancer, dear Dervish, dear snake-charmer! . . .

"There's no reason why *you* should," Babuschka says.

"Can *you* do it?"

"Better than the nun-business."

"You can, then?"

"No. Or rather, not by myself, naturally."

It doesn't make much difference to us how many Jews live in Palestine, whether Haifa will become the new port and Tel Aviv a big town, and how they're getting on with their fruit-planting and cattle-breeding in the plain of Jezreel. Even Hebrew can't charm us, as long as they fail to say anything in it that we haven't already heard in other languages. I don't expect they will say anything. In spite of the *Dybbuk* I have as little belief in the future of their poetry and painting and sculpture as I have in ours; even less, since they are more enlightened and all that lies behind them. Their achievements in the usual European directions are precisely the things they have borrowed from other peoples. They are not visual folk. The action is now taking unusual directions. Everything rational or semi-rational in Palestine may go as it chooses. Not till Zionism stops being a Jewish affair, a department of the League of Nations, till they stop using the settlements as publicity and allow their irrationality to become visible, till the arithmetic-masters take some notice of unreason and cross out the figures: not till then will anything that has meaning for us emerge from it all. The reason for disintegrating the Jews is not Israel, but the whole of contemporary humanity, with its civilization and culture split up by speculation and haggling analysis, deprived of all reason by the tyranny of the machine, diseased and spoiled by literature and art and a hundred phenomena of the past and present; this sick body that can neither live nor die.

If what streams from this corpse is spirit, then they are fighting against the spirit; and it often looks as if they wanted to despiritualize it with peasant hands. The struggle will not prove decisive, nor is it desirable that it should. Moreover no greater benefit would

come of a victory than the conquest of the flesh by the spirit of blessed memory, which luckily does not come to pass. The combatants, however, are staging a new form of knighthood: the Paladins of the Flesh. The picture of the melancholy warrior on his tired steed, with the banner of the cross over his armor, one of the commonplaces with which they used once to dupe our childish fancy, has faded; and in its place they have put a spectacled figure with a spade, but in an unheroic guise. It won't do. The spectacles spoil it. We no longer have a Daumier to immortalize this Don Quixote. It is better to do without pictures altogether.

Today there are two facts: conditions in Russia and the Kwuzah; both are attempts to solve the same problem, though their methods are diametrically opposite. Jews have a share in both. Their part in the Russian *coup d'état* is exaggerated by our effendis. If it corresponded at all to the provocation it had, it may well have been pretty big; for Tsardom did its utmost to bring about Jewish Bolshevism. They are not up to it. No provocation was able to overcome their instincts, which in the last instance were conservative, and their intellect balked at pushing rancor to its utmost limits. Only Russians could have achieved Lenin's fanaticism, a mixture of hate and Utopianism. Russian peasants, who know nothing of machines—the only people who have never grown acquainted with them—can be stirred up to a superstitious reverence for electric motors. Only a philosophic Russian, as yet untouched by the machine, could have conceived the over-romantic idea that the soul must be destroyed, and that salvation could come only to a humanity which had at last been mechanized.

The Kwuzah, with its white idolatry of the child, is a Jewish invention. Emotions drawn from old sources mix with those of to-day. Naturally it is those of today that strike the inquirer with their actuality and that insist on practical farming in conversation with strangers. There is nothing to be said against it, yet I can't believe in it. I doubt their rationalism, for all that they are spec-

tacled folk and that Marx was one of them. These outsiders are not filled to the brim with Marxism. I believe they are trusting in an extremely unpractical Utopia, a romantic idea which is harder to see through than Lenin's and also stands higher. The Russian paradox is repeated the other way about. They believe in the metaphysical power of the clod because they have been estranged from the clod for thousands of years, because they have the least possible acquaintance with it. Their Utopia comes near to being realized in their white nurseries, although their care professes to be merely rational hygiene. Lenin, who was suspicious of all cults, mistrusted white.

The significance of Bolshevism is not restricted to the bloody experiment in Russia; and the Kwuzah is just as little exhausted by the agreeable spectacle of the peaceful display of the remote settlers. It is a Dybbuk played by Jews. Since the Jews feel, in prosperity or the reverse, that they are the outposts of that spirit, now run dry, that must be expelled by the flesh of a healthier posterity, it falls to them to undertake to set the stage. The contents of the piece, however, concern us all, whether we are Jews, Christians, or what not. The variations follow of their own accord. You must take sides, whether here or yonder.

"Do you mean we must work too?" Babuschka asked.

Over there is a large steamer lying outside the harbor; and the siren is calling for the quarantine-doctor to let her in.

"Do you mean . . . ?" Babuschka repeats.

Yes, I know; but I pretend not to hear and clap the glass to my eye so as to be free of all this white-dazzle and to get a look at the steamer. Babuschka doesn't stir.

No, then; no, I can't do it. Too slack, too old! Besides, it would be useless. We are not snake-charmers; and I have something else to do, I'm busy. We are visual people. *Chalom, Palestine!*

I hope there's still a decent deck-cabin. Come, Babuschka! Aboard for Hellas!

GREECE



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## THE ACROPOLIS

THE voyage from Haifa to the Piræus along the coasts of Asia Minor lasted seven peaceful days. As table-companions we had two Frenchmen, one of whom had dined in every capital in the world and could still remember every menu verbatim. He lived at Tunis, where he had planted vines from Burgundy and already possessed the produce of several years in his cellars. "People used to say that Burgundy grapes failed in any other climate. Myths of that sort get about, one never knows why. Of course you can't produce Beaure in England, whatever *nos chers alliés* may choose to imagine; but the notion that Tunisian grapes haven't the least suspicion of bouquet has yet to be knocked on the head. Of course the flavor is different; but why shouldn't it be? There are people—not perhaps the finest judges, I admit—who pretend that it is superior. It's different with Bordeaux; you can't take cuttings from that. It turns bad, if you send it on a journey." After this the gentleman from Tunis confessed that he was not so very keen on Bordeaux; Burgundy appealed to him much more, and not only as a dinner-wine. As a dinner-wine you might conceivably give the palm to Bordeaux, but not for its own sake alone.

At Beirut we shipped cattle for Cyprus. A whole herd stood packed together in the big lighter which lay along our port side. They didn't stand on ceremony with the beasts. A whack on their

forelegs, and up they go! Still on all fours, the beast dangled from the gallows of the crane and rolled its eyes. While it was being hoisted up they let it bump against the side of the ship. Then the chain rattled through the pulley and soon the animal was standing motionless in the hold. The business lasted six hours; a cow at each turn of the crane, and the calves by two and threes. The smell was none of the best.

On the Greek Maundy Thursday we arrived at Athens. From our room, a view of the Acropolis. The house opposite the hotel covered the bulk of the hill and left only the outline of the coast and the sacred columns visible.

"Why sacred?" asked Babuschka.

The house opposite was a nuisance. A crown can't be judged without the thing it crowns, and the Acropolis was not built to be glanced at from a hotel-window. As soon as Babuschka was properly dressed we started out; just before the climb I called a halt.

"Just ruins!" said Babuschka. Apparently she had put on the wrong shoes. I too failed, however, to feel any heart-throb, although I did not hold it back; and a troubling sensation of strangeness, which had come over me on the balcony of the hotel, still stuck. The marble building did not dominate the hill, and seemed too small by comparison with the plateau and the height of the rock. The feeling of constraint reduced me to silence. Later on . . . tomorrow, at all events . . . I shall probably laugh at myself. It often happens like that, especially with the most important things. The heart stops, precisely because you want it to leap. The heart is a goose. The Acropolis too small? Acropolis . . . this syllable crowned not only the hill, but Athens entire: crowned Greece, embraced antiquity. The word lures on the eye, familiar as it is with every detail of front and rear, right and left, from a hundred reproductions. The word expanded and drew the photographs together. Propylæa, Parthenon, Erechtheum, had long since become concepts immune from destruction, sanctuaries which

gained by their fragmentary state. One had never considered the stupid mountain's pretensions. All the result of that accursed photography, giving only the part and treating the hill like an obedient and picturesque side-wing.

Babuschka had always imagined it like that and regarded it as retribution; what she meant by that remained a mystery . . . presumably Palestine.

The Acropolis is there; the remains are amply sufficient for a reconstruction of the whole. It could bear even greater damage. Only the imaginary Acropolis, the word, the concept, the crown of completion as we had arranged it in advance, lies in ruins, incapable of restoration. Let us be quite clear about it: neither the Parthenon, nor the Propylæa, nor (to my mind) the curious Erechtheum makes it impossible, but the total Acropolis itself. (Or rather, I am expressing myself badly: let me remark parenthetically that when I say "makes it impossible," I should add "for me"; for simplicity's sake I say "it.") In saying the word Acropolis, one forgot the parts which in any case must be seen in relation to each other. Although one was aware of the Propylæa and the Erechtheum, one unreflectingly imagined the existence of some unity. It is this unity that proves the obstacle. Just in the same way one forgot the mountain. I have always been at the bottom of the class in geometrical demonstration.

When we got to the top the mountain disappeared and the buildings spoke out. The sun was scorching; we had to shade our eyes. The voice of the temple beat upon one's brain and ploughed it up; and at first the sun prevented our choosing any viewpoint at all. We stumbled about over the troublesome stones and the gigantic empty space between the Propylæa and the other buildings filled us with agoraphobia. Everything was new. Why can't you go straight on from the Propylæa? Why doesn't the great glittering pinky-white building lie right in front, instead of all to the right? And why that queer little thing, so far to the left that it ceases to belong

altogether? The big thing was the Parthenon, of course. You felt like a visitor to the moon. Babuschka's sense of the site held its own. She was quite at home up here, and knew of shady spots where you could get a possible view.

I suddenly recalled the funny phrase of an elderly Frenchman: *le désordre des acropoles grecques*. The French want everything arranged to a hair'sbreadth; they would rather have a mediocre temple so long as it was bang in the middle of the axis of its forecourt. The Frenchman's phrase struck me then as a bit impertinent, more papal than the pope. The phrase was not so foolish, however; for the disorder is immoderately disturbing. As a result of throwing the center of gravity to the right the entire hill seems to lean over, leaving the Erechtheum in mid-air. Why? Is it chance? The layout of the Acropolis was merely willful, then: the shortsighted conservatism of the religious, the petty jealousy of the architects and the narrow outlook of the officials were responsible for it. Very likely things went on in Athens in the fifth century before Christ just as they do in Berlin today.

Then there is the astounding dignity of the Parthenon. As soon as your sight gets to feel at home, it isolates the building, makes it independent of the *désordre*, raises it to an even steeper height. Its dignity increases to an almost inhospitable degree and precludes all possibility of closer relations with the other buildings. Such relations would have weakened it. A style pushed to such a sublime height could not admit the Propylaea to perform their practical function as an introductory gateway.

We admire and we remain unmoved. The beauty is undisputed, but it fails to satisfy our inordinate affections since it passes beyond our horizon. Probably we are hindered by a foolish instinct for self-preservation which dislikes being upset; it declares the form to be foreign and abstract, albeit the most familiar of all forms, since without it there would be no Europe. We cannot bear the purity of the extract, and must sully its exalted spirituality with our own

romanticism, give it a soul: the devout bending of a Christian head, a respect for death and the life within. The Christian arms himself against these blessed pagans. We are always wanting to surrender; that is why we came here. But we don't know how to set about it. The temple invites us to do no such thing; how does one enter it? The steps to the columns are gigantic; there is nothing easy or comfortable about the place. Are the buildings there merely to be looked at?

It is precisely this ultimate inspectableness that must have fascinated artists; for what have we made of our own art but an abstraction meant to gratify the eye alone? At this last result the visual man shrinks back and asks for a temple to pray in: a ludicrous entanglement of his instincts. We attributed to this exalted period a belief in art for art's sake; and instead of being satisfied with this somewhat unusual justification we expose ourselves to the torrid sun and sigh for a feeling heart. We spy out our colleagues in those bygone days; were they really so certain?

This Erechtheum, which, as far as time goes, might still have been built by the Parthenon generation, follows the spiritual requirements to such a point that its architecture becomes a subsidiary affair. The building is put together out of annexes. The porch with the pretty Caryatids threatens to come right away. That is where disorder lies.

But the front of the Parthenon! . . . The Doric columns! How they stand, how they taper, how they carry the entablature! There are no lovelier columns. Their dignity is not ineradicably static.

I am writing a newspaper story instead of looking. Yes: I do admire, and it sinks in. The reddish tone of the marble must enchant even the blind. But what has the Parthenon to do with tone? Ought we to reckon with such details?

We clamber up the stylobate and go round the peristyle, and I preen myself upon my Greek terminology. There are wonderful glimpses between the columns. After viewing them Babuschka

runs straight out into the open; I should like to have the enclosed space, the holy of holies. While it is easy to reconstruct the façades one has no means of imagining the interior. How did the cella look: the windowless room where stood the giant gold and ivory Athena which you could see only through the opened door? Suddenly the suppliants stepped from brilliant sunshine into the gloom, where the statue glistened alone amid the glowing red walls. Here yawns an empty space, and the blind destruction stands shamelessly exposed. Here the temple becomes a ruin for the first time. The columns surround a void: very lovely columns, the loveliest in the world, but still mere columns. We have got used to this condition; archeology has given us the means to an imaginary reconstruction. We know how it once looked; or think we do. Somewhere in our brain-box is a cell with the figures neatly arranged. We turn over our stock of knowledge, but instead of the room itself all we get is a series of concepts. Often, and especially as we are just arriving, the figures deny us entry. Wind blows between the columns. Afterwards, in the open air, when you stand above the roofs and chimneys of the Piræus and look towards the city, you breathe a sigh of relief. That is good, too.

"Far better!" Babuschka maintains.

I turn abruptly away from the view and look for the vanished room among the scattered remains. Those beasts who destroyed that room! Those Turks, that Morosini with his Lüneburger lieutenant. A German threw the bomb, and it is therefore appropriate that German archeologists should set the patchwork in order. My fury at their destruction appeased my disillusion. At least I could point out the gaps. Perhaps I feel no reflection of the heroism which once adorned the pediments and metopes; but upon the slightest consideration one realizes that all this must remain out of account as mere ornamental trimming. Our yearning for something to mitigate this rigid synthesis springs from our lower instincts.

We ought to wash ourselves from head to foot like Mohammedans before they pray, and drive out the old unclean Adam.

I told Babuschka about the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum; incidentally there are still traces of sculpture in the pediment.

She asks whether the pieces don't stand out better in a museum; at which I treat her to a regular harangue. She nods and points to the town; talks of a gray palette; muses on about Toledo.

Painting has spoilt us. We no longer see any columns. It is not the space in the Parthenon but our sense of space that is in ruins.

Good Friday Evening, Procession of Lights. They collect on the Place de la Constitution. Babuschka suddenly developed a weakness for the Greek rite and exchanged the monument on the hill for the more accessible hocus-pocus of the priests with their braided tresses. It was the first or the second day after the full moon, an ideal illumination for the Acropolis. Unless you have seen it by moonlight you cannot converse with it. Very well: the lights first, and then the Acropolis. We stood in a tight wedge of evil-smelling humanity and had to take care not to get set on fire. Soldiers in quaint, white knitted garments and round full ballet skirts kept passing by. The Metropolitan was in cloth of gold and made the sign of the cross in blessing.

When it was night we went up on the hill. The moonlight made the rows of columns seem bigger and now the closed space welled up inside the great oblong. The stone draperies were astir in the Hall of the Korai at the Erechtheum. The organic shortcomings of the annex which had worried me by daylight now turned into the happy inspiration of a lyric poet whose poetic material was stone. The town lay in shadowy quiet. Countless lights formed the chorus for the noble drama on the hill. The Acropolis had come into its own.

Babuschka wanted to leave everything to the moon, and was now for sending all the lights down into the valley.

A day later, at midnight, the Resurrection of the Savior in the presence of the President of the Republic and the authorities. The Metropolitan came out of his Metropolitan church and mounted the tribune erected on the square. Choristers in their threadbare everyday clothes walked before him. Their poverty-stricken exterior was distasteful and their singing also left much to be desired. In Russia, in the old days, the Orthodox church found worthier forms for such occasions. You noticed the interest displayed by the faithful, and the basses went deeper. In Athens the popular festival swallowed up everything else. Unexpected military music burst in upon the monotonous chanting of the Metropolitan. Mortars were discharged, rockets went up, and fireworks were let off in honor of the Risen Lord. While the Metropolitan was holding out the cross to be kissed by the President and his wife, who was a good head taller than her consort, people were lighting cigarettes in our tribune close by. Although full dress had been prescribed, the British minister was wearing the gray flannel suit he had had on when we saw him that afternoon at the Stadium; and that too, when he had been dining at home in a dress coat. They have a special etiquette for the smaller nations.

The Metropolitan Church is a wretched modern box. There are a couple of quite small round Byzantine churches, pretty buildings of the ninth century or earlier, with tiny side chapels. One, the old Metropolitan church, stands close alongside the new. Unfortunately only the old façades, with their miscellaneous ornamental marble slabs, are intact. The interior has been furbished up in a boring way. Who knows what may lie under the whitewash? You can imagine blue mosaics on the walls: little treasure-caskets of piety, rough outside and all glorious within. A dozen people or so, and they are full.

The former royal palace, a stupid barrack, rebuilt after the Republican recovery, has a pretty garden. On the square are the

hotels and Cook's. The two main streets ape the big city. The University, Polytechnic, and Museum are grim pseudo-classic buildings, as you might expect. In the Polytechnic they have started a picture-gallery, where there is a recently repainted Crucifixion called a Greco. Babuschka is entertained by the shoe shops.

In order to see the Acropolis from above we climbed Lykabettos, the hill to the East, with an unimportant monastery. The long-distance view enlarges the city and gives it an unexpected beauty. The many commonplace houses, whose sole advantage is their position, turn into a flutter of piquant colors in harmonious and inexhaustible shades: a sea of lilac, gray and white, more beautiful than the real sea, a glimpse of which in the distance adds to the effect, makes it richer and livelier. The Acropolis contributes nothing to it. It looks smaller from here than it does on the other side, still lonelier and stranger, cut off from the rhythm of the sea of houses, a white wrack on the tumult of the waves. To be sure, how could the honorable remains of the age of Pisistratus and Pericles consort with modern houses? Could one expect an Acropolis to become part of the Athens of today? Well, one ought to expect such a thing, since the validity of a building implies such an act of complaisance. The overcoming of such chronological difficulties is exactly what ought to be possible, what has indeed been achieved—if not with Greek buildings, then elsewhere. And the style? There is no reason to allow the Greeks privileges over Gothic or Baroque, still less over the pyramids of Egypt. Style only exists to be overcome. Had the Acropolis grown into its site in Greek times it would not refuse to associate today with the sea of houses and remain solitary on its height. The verticals and horizontals of the marble colonnade obey no law but their own and withdraw from the earth. You come to the conclusion that another ruin would suit the hill better: one of less classic contour, with more flexible forms and particularly one with differences of height arranged stepwise—a medieval building, for

example, like a crusader's castle in Palestine with its arches and jagged outlines and intricate plan. Even houses and hovels of our own day might very likely fit into it and increase the disorder, and yet in spite of the loss of unity the whole might suit the landscape better than the magnificence of these columns.

All architecture can be dismissed by means of this theory. It is to be an accident, then, any jumble of stuff that looks well on the hill? Perhaps it is precisely as an art that I find it hard to cope with; its actuality and completeness obstruct my unbridled instinct for the pictorial. Yet I am susceptible to completeness; I cannot see it from here, but I have seen it. I have only to close my eyes and the columns, the sacred Doric columns, stand there imperishably before me. If you think away the sea of houses—what an effort that is!—and think away the hill and recapture the Acropolis as it was before you arrived on the scene, who could fail to see its proportion, its incomparable dignity!

Because my enthusiasm is either non-existent, or strictly qualified, does that mean that people of today are inattentive? Every Hellenist would say yes. I agree: one cannot sufficiently emphasize our inattention and impotence; but that has nothing to do with this long and short distance phenomenon. We are impotent and inattentive, but more capable than any other generation in the past of seeing and appreciating beauty, precisely because we have lost the means of producing it. We see the Acropolis stripped of its mythology, and therefore more objectively; we see it with the artist's eye, and only its artistic value means anything to us. There is one preliminary condition attaching to its enormous importance: we must be allowed to carry off the Acropolis if we so desire. Only if it is transportable does it retain its highest and purest value. This condition, however, implies a defect in our own development, which eats at the root of our own artistic masterpieces of which we are rightly proud, and is due to an individualism which for the sake of isolated climaxes dismisses the claims of uni-

versality. Did such antitheses exist, then, in Greek civilization? Does not an antiquity flanked by precipices contradict all our literary preconceptions of it? . . . I am letting my fancy run away with me.

The temple of Neptune at Paestum, in the broad plain by the sea, is more effective. Segesta, on its gently rising hill which leans up against the mountain in the background, looks more secure. The solitary landscape today gives the temples a most appropriate setting; and I wonder whether the less noble material of the Sicilian temples does them an actual disservice, or whether marble may not emphasize constructional limitations—not only the art itself, but the artistic effect as well. At Segesta the rudimentary unfinished columns and the rust-colored porous shell-limestone contribute to the atmosphere of the building. As it stands there, it looks as though it had grown up out of the stony realms of earth. It is probable, however, that the builders of the Parthenon would have rejected this impression precisely because of its willful picturesqueness.

Every day I made a fresh attempt. Babuschka struck. To her the Parthenon was well enough, but she would have no more to do with it. An Acropolis means little or nothing to young people like her. A person like me gets covetous and dislikes giving in. Besides, all manner of consequences are involved. It would be simpler to say yes or no. The disquieting part is this Chinese puzzle of ifs and buts, which hinders one's habitually spontaneous attitude to things and pricks one with doubt and uncertainty. Anywhere but here one could bear to make just a slight concession; but here one's confidence is too unbounded.

All one's undertakings, all one's enthusiasms obeyed the tacit reservation that Greece was *hors concours*. I adore the Greeks to the last possible degree, and yet I remain unmoved by their indisputable masterpiece. Senility, I suppose: sclerosis. Some foolish demon of obstinacy makes me stubborn. That agoraphobia was doubtless a premonitory pang. If the situation alone were to

blame, the Theseum, which lies below on a normal site and dates from practically the same period and is almost completely preserved, would arouse our unqualified enthusiasm. Up to the present we have contented ourselves with a distant glance as we passed by. Then it looked like a box with columns, and I made a mental note to come again. Today I was taken there by Fritz Thomas, who wanted to do me a good turn; he pointed out its similarity to the Parthenon. This is very close, as I might have noticed without Thomas's help; but it does not save the Theseum from being terribly dismal. A box of a certain size and shape; but not a breath of life in it.

Thomas smiled. The Theseum is the one perfectly preserved temple of the best period, and in that respect unique. He recommended me to be patient and try again. You must look into it by degrees. Evidently the numerous imitations had spoilt my relish for the originals. That would pass in time.

Why do they always take one for a fool instead of talking sense? Fritz Thomas, the son of old Thomas, is an archeologist and considers the Theseum as a safely foregone conclusion. He has his father's quiet and cautious tolerance. His axioms go about as far as the year so and so. We had come from the so-called Monument of Lysicrates with its little Corinthian columns and its acanthus spray on the roof. It is a hundred years later than the Parthenon; Thomas knows the exact date. I placed the little building about on a par with the modernist style of 1890, not a whit better. Thomas smiled amiably. He wasn't surprised at my incapacity for such things. His father said exactly the same thing when I balked at the Apollo of the Belvedere. The Monument of Lysicrates is another of the foregone conclusions, like every Greek work, as I say, down to about the year so and so. He can quite see, however, that you can go beyond the year so and so, especially in cases of good preservation.

Capacities and foregone conclusions are one and the same thing

to archeologists, and the Greek spirit equals good preservation. It is just the same with the Egyptian spirit. I too have got my foregone conclusions. One of the negative ones is a disbelief in all science which concerns itself with art; one of the positive ones is a belief in the immortality of the antique. But I don't therefore feel absolutely obliged, when in Athens, to be content with clichés a century old.

Experience is what I want, thinks Thomas, nodding amiably, as one might nod to somebody who still took snuff. And the boy isn't yet thirty. Of course one then goes much further than one really means, and runs away with oneself. He left me at the Theseum and went on to his foregone conclusions. Not till then did I really turn venomous. Phidias, who made the pediment groups of the Parthenon, would have spat at Lysicrates and the Theseum. And if the whole of Athens consisted of monuments of Lysicrates, this experience wouldn't rob me of a tittle of my foregone conclusions about Greece. What has Greece to do with a couple of broken fragments? People like Thomas behave as do good Catholics, who cross themselves at every Madonna they pass without interrupting their conversation. Nevertheless a still small voice appealed to my conscience, reminding me of something: of those imitations which probably had spoiled things for me.

How odd: there is some truth in it. I could not help fancying that this Theseum was not Greek at all, but the result of classicism like all the Bourses that they've put up in this style in our own day. I feel the difference, of course. At every glance you see the superior handling of the stone, the nobler material. But at least you have to look; whenever you go away the strange fancy comes back like a gray veil. Perhaps a clever man might still build a Theseum today out of the same marble; at all events the realization would not be hampered by the insurmountable metaphysical complexity of our cathedrals. Probably the temple is the higher abstraction; you can take that as a foregone conclusion, but it doesn't

help you much. Possibly it is just this abstract quality that leads to the gray veil and the chilling of the eye. Possibly I miss the curve. When I was passing the ruins of the Roman theater just now, I suddenly felt a pang of longing for the circus at Verona and I would have given anything for a glimpse of the Colosseum. That is as may be; but nothing has diminished my earliest impression of Verona—it was on my first journey across the Alps—and the Colosseum still continues to grow and to embrace a greater space. What does that mean? Feebler synthesis? Or more unbridled feeling?

Feeling is not required for the abstraction of a Greek temple. The young man said something to this effect. Possibly, possibly. Certainly the temple's repudiation of the circle is a source of strength. I recognize it in a chastened spirit, just as I recognize Kant's Ethics; but I should like to be off to Verona this very moment.

One thing says more for the temple than all the mythology and the foregone conclusions of the archeologists. That is its trump-card, which will find it many recruits among the faithful; perhaps the young man who treated me like snuff has some inkling of it: the modernity of the temple. It doesn't go down to the year so and so, but right down to the present day. Its beginnings lie three thousand years before the Parthenon, when Imhotep the wise built King Zoser his temple, and if any style has a future, here it is. It is immortal. Greek method stands nearer to our clear-sighted architecture than our own past. The synthesis of vertical and horizontal is spirit of our spirit. You need only do away with a couple of heroic friezes, which in any case are merely applied. Even these removable additions may prove useful to us.

If reflection alone sufficed I should be on my knees in front of the Theseum; but the visual person can't do it. The visual person is a reactionary old snuff-taker. The kernel of it is: I have fallen for Baroque and may as well go and bury myself. But I ask myself,

with the lid of the box already touching my skull: Why did I never think of Roman arches or Gothic vaults in front of the pyramids? Why did the real or imaginary affinity of Egyptian geometry for our own cubism in no way cramp our conception of the omnipotence of the Old Kingdom, but rather intensify still further its sphinx-like mystery? A moment more, please: did Phidias, this man in the pediment, kneel before the Vertical?

You ass! You've shown that you're only *appliqué* yourself! And click goes the lid of the snuff-box.

The resemblance of the Theseum to the Parthenon is a trick of nature. They are two brothers, whose faces you might confuse; one is a genius and the other a deaf mute. When I stand up on the Acropolis the Parthenon and its remains can do whatever they like with me. The Theseum, with all its parts in position, unique in preservation, leaves me quite unmoved. One would like to determine where the difference lies, look for the mistake, identify the worm. The marble lacks that reddish patina; but the gray which covers the stone does not come from the material. The error doubtless lies in the proportions, and if you found that, you would possess the key to a great deal. You would have to be an architect and know how to measure; but that would probably involve you in another archeology. I keep swinging backwards and forwards between the Parthenon and the Theseum and every time the difference gets bigger. The error is a gross one, yet I can't lay my finger on it. It must lie in the columns: if not in the form, then in their placing. The elements of this architecture are balanced on a knife-edge. A sceptic would like to make capital out of its similarity to the Parthenon and shut up the blade of the knife. But that won't do. Confrontation deprives the Parthenon of nothing; on the contrary, it confirms our criticism of the period. There were dead blanks in the immediate neighborhood of the Acropolis. Whether the error rests on gross or petty differences is a matter

of general counterpoint. Perfection happened seldom, and few eyes could compass it. It was just the same with their sculpture: one Phidias to a hundred bunglers. The mark of every great period, the steady high level of collective achievement, does not seem to occur in Greece. All the higher, then, their personal accomplishment. Only so can we explain the fantastically short duration of their golden age. Individuals never last long, and the Lysicrates rubbish begins betimes. The conception of Greek form as an Apolline *lit de repos* upon which you arrive at masterpieces without effort, is as inane as the fairy-tale of their gay pleasures and contemplative cheerfulness. The Acropolis was built in the midst of grievous warfare, and the public and social distraction of the people was anything but a natural soil for the development of art. We might even regard these preliminary conditions as the forerunners of our own joys and sorrows.

Slowly dusk is falling. I had always been worried by the arrangement of the Acropolis; and I could not see why the Parthenon did not continue the axis of the Propylæa. The little Erechtheum, too, never seemed to balance properly. Having walked through the Propylæa you must stop and wait quietly. One can never wait long enough. Although the Acropolis was knocked into shape by an unquiet genius, it was not built for people as hasty as ourselves. The interruption of the axis is not perhaps purely arbitrary. Now I cannot imagine any other arrangement. Am I gradually giving in to habit? The desire to see Parthenon and Propylæa in one axis now seems like the demand of a novice. We renounce the obvious in the interest of a higher actuality, which brings the main temple into prominence. That is what Rameses attempted on a different scale; but he ran the risk of brutalizing the whole arrangement. Here the ways part. Egypt could hand over all its materials to Greek architecture except its sites and the sense of security which needed no castle-rock. And the later Egyptians could not furnish either the moderation and spirituality or the instinct of the modern

artist to reckon with the coöperation of the spectator and require it to complete his design. The problem of the Acropolis hardly admitted of any other solution, if you consider yourself justified in overlooking the claims of the view from below. The three buildings are bold yet extraordinarily discreet. They play with empty space, and the very smallness of the Erechtheum, at first so disturbing, favors the total cadence. To make the difference all the more striking, it was placed perceptibly lower and the architecture was enlivened with the Caryatid porch. The contrast confirms it. The difference of height, which you miss from below, could be neither greater nor less when seen up above. You might argue that the *désordre* was really consummate orderliness. Possibly the Erechtheum was also destined to hide Lykabettos which lies too near the eye and upsets the large outline of the mountain-setting in the background.

However generally valid its rules may be, this architecture is not for every one. Above all, it insists on being looked at. Stop and look at me! And what is more, you must find the point which the artist chose for the best view. The feelings you require in order to exhaust its ultimate effects approximate to the sensuousness of modern masters.

In such an atmosphere personality must retreat into the background; the keyboard is too limited. There was the column. The Doric column, the early gift from Egypt, a work of art complete in itself, comparable with no element in any other architecture, was bound up with unalterable rules and regulations, worthy of adoration, but a rigid autocrat that would admit no development. Every incursion upon the Doric order must lead to its downfall. The Ionic column was predestined to decline. One can hardly conceive how the two kinds could exist side by side; one would prefer to ascribe the Doric to a period whose world of ideas was over and done with when the Ionic came on the scene. The historical genesis of both kinds confirms this idea. In the volute we

no longer are aware of the stone, and dignity has already departed. An appeal to the lighter structure of the Ionic building is a commonplace piece of dialectic. Bach has written enchanting light music, but not for the mass. The Corinthian capital turned the column into mere confectionery and the temple into a trinket. Henceforth there was no stopping. The decline is associated with the Ionic column, never with the Doric. If Ionic and Corinthian are to pass as equally authoritative stylistic companions to the Doric, as we have learnt to regard them, the Parthenon must be given back to the Egyptians as an alien importation.

No detail of the beauty or strength of the Doric column is to be found in our Christian architecture; yet it strikes me that the Christian architect stood on a broader basis and explored more spatial possibilities, on which account he was able to achieve an incomparably richer range of development. This examination cannot lead us to overestimate Gothic, if only because the most secret enchantment of Chartres or Rheims would be unthinkable without Greece; we simply recognize more profoundly the solitariness of the Acropolis on the hill at Athens.

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## THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

At first I dismissed the museums, from the same laziness that had got in my way in the early days in Cairo. In Athens, of all places, one had hoped to do without indoor art. The Acropolis was more important than the contents of the pediments and metopes they had ravished away. But when one day we saw a big photograph of the Moschophoros at the Institute we went inside. Our first glimpse was of an enchanting baroque; for by an oversight we did not start at the beginning, but at the last room, where the Nike reliefs are. Thus the loveliest part fell into our hands first. I don't care for the Nike temple, either for its own sake or in any other way. It sits on the bastion in front of the Propylæa like the dot of an i that has got lost; and I don't know whether there's much sense in the careful German reconstruction, since the most important part, the balustrade, is missing. This is where the reliefs were placed. Unfortunately they are very badly damaged; you have to make them up out of fragmentary bodies without faces, and shreds of flying draperies. Nevertheless the stone is alive and brings out just those Greek qualities that one most needs at this moment: human emotion. The hands without arms grasp idly in mutual dalliance or slumber among the folds like happy children. Breasts without bodies breathe lightly. The best preserved sandaled maiden stands for them all and gives out her rhythms in every

direction. I can't guess what the motif means and I don't want to know. Archeology would spoil even what remains. I can feel a hint of that rococo of Bach's beyond the cantatas. They are gods and goddesses who take on a veiled human shape, human beings whom the fortunate possession of pinions has turned into winged divinities.

Beside this music the metopes of the Parthenon—the one or two that escaped the rapacious hand of Elgin—turn to stone. Very animated stone, of course, inviting the minutest inspection, but crippled by its dignity of purpose, official stone. A genius may have composed the whole; but the execution was left to craftsmen who went about their business like public servants and said very little in a great many words. The number of planes is often confused, and you can only see the horses' legs, although their bodies are there. Where greater repose prevails the relief approaches at times a sleepy genre scene. The superior preservation of the metopes may give the Nike reliefs an unfair advantage, for their ruinous condition indulges our morbid predilection for the sketch; but that does not exhaust the difference. People think they have traced dozens of different hands in the metopes. The Nike frieze is the authentic creation of one artist who was not in a position to impart his conceptions to others, since he does not seem to have been quite clear on the subject himself. He was concerned with translating those postures of the figure into terms of marble, not with the scenic possibilities of marble as such. There is something calligraphic about his way of carving. The girl binding her sandal grows out of the stone, remains clasped to the background, and involuntarily moves and turns in such a way that many planes are defined within one and the same figure. The drapery, moreover, which in the metopes is mainly a dead affair, here plays a positive rôle, organically involved with the body. Once again it binds the planes together and lets the light glide in cascades over the limbs like a silvery melody which accompanies an orchestra and is accom-

panied by it. The Nike reliefs are on a smaller scale than the metopes and were made a couple of decades later. Their graphic restraint could hardly adorn the architrave of a Parthenon. But no difference of dimension can heighten the artistic consequence, especially if the sculpture is not to be eliminated as inappropriate. In the Nike frieze the sculptor completes the metamorphosis of his material. The great creator of the Parthenon pediment-groups did the same when he filled his triangular space with tumultuous baroque. The Nike frieze comes closer to this baroque than to the style of the metopes; for the far greater dimensions of the pediment-groups it substitutes a more intimate relation between the material and the decorated surface.

The plaster-casts of the pediment-figures are no better shown here than the originals in London. One can't, of course, attach much meaning to substitutes, but who knows whether a very costly artistic restoration could be successful: whether the temple-pediment is not after all the only appropriate place, even though it would never quite satisfy our curiosity and though it would have to dispense with the actual grouping. If only one could be in the British Museum for an hour or so! Of all the works of Greece scattered about the world, none is harder to do without. Did the artistic peer guess the full significance of his rape? Nobody would have grudged him the chryselephantine statue which would have been in place anywhere and which would certainly have answered better to English taste. Not the sumptuous colossus in the treasure-chamber but the three-cornered eye in the brow of the temple was the holy place and crowned the Acropolis and Greece itself. For this "rescue" I could loathe the English. Byron himself, the enthusiastic singer of Hellas, was only a lord, after all, who knew how to sing.

The rest of the museum is archeology. When I went there for the first time I walked more and more quickly through the two rooms and hurried back at a trot. A friendly custodian inquired whether

I had lost something and wanted to help me look for it. In other countries that is how one trots through the annual exhibitions; one might as well spare oneself all the miles one covers. In the Acropolis Museum the distances are small, and in the two small rooms the things are not tightly packed. You can see everything admirably: the reliefs in a side light and the sculptures in the round from every side. They are intimate rooms, made for the enjoyment of the amateur, and one would like to enjoy it. How one sighs for artists, how keen one is, how ready to listen to the first hint! One holds one's heart in one's hand, to lay it at the feet of an Athena, an Apollo; and at every step you feel it getting colder, and useless.

My journey led me backwards from the Parthenon sculptures to the early years. As soon as you reach the room where the Ephebes are you realize the paradox of Greek art: the earlier periods are weaker—not really more primitive, poorer in technique, naïver, but on the contrary. There are things earlier than the Parthenon frieze which look like the imitations of a virtuoso. The two famous fragments of horses look like products of a delicate eclecticism which flees from nature into abstraction, and uses the antique form—the immortal form of the Greek horse's head—merely to stylize it. Style suppresses nature, even the nature of the marble, and narrows down its volume into a soapy sheen. There is something feminine about the look of them; but possibly they are heterosexual.

I happened to have a picture postcard from a friend in my pocket, with the Bamberg horseman on it. I showed it to Thomas.

“Look at that, Thomas!”

Thomas looked and recognized it at once: had even been to Bamberg once upon a time.

“Listen, Thomas; if these little horses are works of art, what is the Bamberg horseman?”

“Romanesque,” replied Thomas.

I made an inane grimace. “Why?”

He smiled discerningly. "It is the only thing you can say; that is the difference between us. One must grasp the categories."

The state could build houses on a history of art like that. It is a booking-office, a counting-machine, an address-book. I ask: who is the man? Does he pay his debts? Is he a lunatic? Can he play the piano? Does he like Proust? Would you recommend him as a son-in-law? The history of art replies: 13 Friedrichstrasse, 3rd Floor.

The feminine impression emanates from the whole of Greek art before the time of the Parthenon, even the famous boys with the broken arms, even the still more famous head of a youth which seems to resemble the Apollo of Olympia. I can quite see why people consider it beautiful; I consider it so myself. There is nothing else to do but consider it beautiful. That is just what makes it superfluous for people of our period. They produce the husks of figures—form, well enough, for their style is perceptible, but passive and, so to speak, already interpreted form: a mold, whose content they reproduce. From the same motives people like certain *tondos* of Botticelli's. The style is genre. The little relief of the pensive Athena leaning on her spear, the favorite of every artistic young person, anticipates the Pre-raphaelite subject-picture. The relief might serve as the crest to any Lyceum Club.

One thinks of these feminine traits as marking the transition and entertains hopes of the early period. True value must lie in the archaic, if anywhere. The reliefs of the Ludovisi throne dart through one's memory, and other admirable things, especially the one in the Louvre, the poem in relief: *La Fleur Enchantée*. The professionals all say: Ah, wait till you get to Athens! Involuntarily one thinks of the Acropolis Museum as a lyrical anthology. They can't all have been stolen, then. If the highest achievements are missing, one must look for the average, the norm of an illustrious age.

The average exists. Masses of statues of the sixth and early fifth

centuries, which lay in the débris of the old Acropolis after the Persian wars, dispel all doubts as to the character of those works which were then thought fit to decorate the temple of Athena. They tell us about the fashions of the archaic period; we have ample opportunities of learning about hairdressing and clothes. The upper and under garment, the pleated shirt, Attic and Ionic, fold and pucker, border and hem, tress and ringlet. Soon it all becomes familiar, even to satiety. It affects neither the faces nor the bodies. The faces are fabricated on the roughest possible scheme, merely to show the hairdressing; the bodies—if such one may call those padded marble members—merely carry the clothes. They look all dolled up. Was the Acropolis a dressmaker's shop? We cling to our recollections; and like a miser counting his money, we recall with jealous satisfaction the throne of Venus, the *Fleur Enchantée*. Have they anything to do with these dressmaker's dummies? The slightest trace of any real connection would poison them for us. No: all poison slips harmlessly off the Ludovisi throne; but I now know why I have never overcome a secret anxiety over the Berlin seated goddess and have always balked at placing that sumptuous affair on the same plane as the quiet reliefs in Rome. Stylistically it comes close enough. The lines run in a similar way, the forms are related, and that is enough to assure its superiority over all the dolls in Athens. One can imagine the Berlin goddess as a worthy ornament for a temple, and dwell upon its pose and gesture, upon its decorative qualities—which is as much as to say, upon its rational values, which still survive even when on closer examination you think you notice a somewhat mechanical stylization, especially in the face. All rational considerations seem remote in front of the reliefs in Rome. The artist's sensibility alone creates the cult-form. We do not ask where the Ludovisi throne stood, whether in a temple or elsewhere, and how it was adored. Possibly it wasn't a throne at all; none the less we are still ready to adore it.

In the cabinets of the Acropolis Museum the ideas, with which

we toyed outside when gazing at the temple, unexpectedly find their confirmation. One would never expect an insecure culture, which maintained its level only with the utmost effort and for a very short time, to be realized in sculpture. Here they had constantly to find substitutes. Actually the variations in quality are incomparably greater here than in architecture. The dreariness of the Theseum has none of the sting of ugliness. It's a hard job to get used to the fantastic fact that the two or three things in Europe and America represent practically all the important works that have wandered abroad and left Greece with practically nothing, in spite of its more comprehensive possessions. Important and unimportant are not the adjectives to express such differences; there had to be good and mediocre statues, but our concern for order has led us to indiscriminate admiration. The great demand required daily repetitions. Jones and Smith wanted to dedicate votive-offerings, and the provinces had to have their share. Hence these arbitrary, commercial, tiresome statues of gods—always gods. Our countless pietàs and crucifixes, those fingerposts of piety, are often dull and insignificant, but they are never repellent; and the last and dullest wooden cross retains the gesture of the Sufferer. The archaic ladies suffer from a banality of gesture. The scheme carries no weight. The onus of this failure weighs not so much on the art as on the cult that was satisfied with such mannequins.

You have to grow old before you realize this. This sort of disillusion is not mixed up with the museum as such. Why not another insignificant museum? You have had dozens of them and the failures slip away like an idle conversation in a railway carriage. The final torment of this kind is always the Vatican museum with its gigantic halls; but as soon as you have noted Winckelmann's mistake about the Laocoön and the Apollo of the Belvedere, you are impressed, for the young man's guide-book contains the comforting explanation: not originals, but Roman copies. Winckelmann did not learn about those glories from the Romans;

he merely imagined them, and rightly too, even if his criticism is beside the point. You could follow his thoughts, and the banality of those masses of stone in the Vatican piled up and up until you could look towards Greece from the top of the hill they made. That was the beginning. Rome watered it down and spoiled it. The few Greek originals in Rome were enough to start one's sensuous longings in the right direction. Roman copies performed the miracle of turning stone into bread; and you never once needed the archeologist's powers of suggestion. The amateur had a far greater wizard at his elbow: the evolutionary value of the Greek dowry. Greek emotion glows in all past ages and even in the great masters of the present day.

I felt like the poet who for years exchanged letters with a woman who lived far away and whom he had never seen. In the end he could not resist asking her for a first rendezvous. When after endless abortive journeys he finally discovered the hiding-place of his beloved, he found an old woman with false teeth.

Babuschka complains about the fashions. The waist is all in the wrong place and the lower parts are frankly impossible. All full up above, and nothing down below. It's perfectly true. The taste of these ladies was unutterable. Their hastily modeled bodies were covered by a close-fitting chemise. Over that a mantilla-like garment fell in two ends with pointed folds. One end stopped about at the thigh, where it was gathered up like a curtain, and the other went a bit lower. Their gait was left free. Behind, too, the dress stops immediately above the interesting part of the person. Although the skin is everywhere protected by the jersey-like chemise, the drapery, which is also superabundantly painted, leaves the remainder as good as naked. The contrast is obscene. Félicien Rops has availed himself of such effects. Incidentally it shows up a grotesque anatomical build; many of the ladies are seriously deformed.

Among the dolls is the bust of a woman with human features.

She holds her hand before her breast, and in her hand a fruit or something of the sort. The long face escapes from the usual scheme and is modeled by an artist. They say he was a Naxian. In any case he had nothing to do with the dolls, or with the baroque of the later period. You would rather describe his form as Gothic; you can trace the way to Chartres.

It's only a step from here to the Moschophoros. We are near the beginning of the sixth century, and the cult of dress disappears. This is real primitive art: nothing false, objective, only a bit limited in scope. From the reproduction one imagined the charming motif as much more powerful, much more definite in its plane surfaces. The photograph adds tones which one took for solid shape and which are quite absent in the original. Actually it narrows down to the plastic ornament of a naïve craftsman who tried to treat marble like the soft poros to which he was accustomed, and incised his stone. Even the Æginetans at Munich used this incised technique which did not permit them much scope and gave their work a merely graphic quality. The damage done by the restorer very likely accentuates the effect. The Moschophoros is beautifully modeled, but degenerates too quickly into flatness, which explains why we only get the one first impression from it. The work does not grow. The motif and the way in which the beast lies on the man's shoulders and the way in which his symmetrical arms catch hold of the animal's legs, to round off the motif, are convincing enough; but there the matter rests. Its self-contained pose approximates to the heraldic stamp.

Hereabouts, or perhaps a little earlier, we may place the standing goddess just acquired for Berlin, which I saw shortly before we came away: a primitive craftsman's piece, of which there must have been many. The roughly cut ornament of the stiff face hardly touches the outskirts of our artistic sensibility; it is a matter for pure archeology. This idol-type with deep hollow eyes and the

blue-eyed Athena! Hundreds and hundreds of years before this, Homer sang of her.

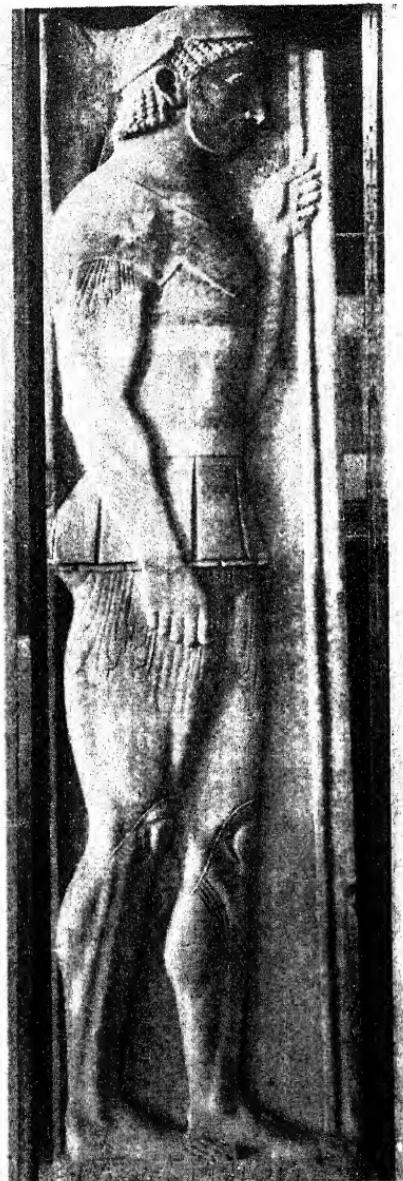
The fragmentary center-group of the Gigantomachy is mere ornament. Athena is not striking the giants, but confines herself to a hieratic gesture. The oblique parallels may have adorned the pediment of the old Hecatompedon in a worthy fashion; and this function as colored ornament may perhaps justify the three-headed serpent-monster of painted poros and the combat of Herakles. If you consider them soberly, these corkscrew-like affairs of the early period are barbaric stuff and really belong to an ethnographical museum. Thomas, who tried to entangle our discussion with mythology, developed a kind of excitement during which his baggy-kneed trousers took on archaic forms. I was disquieted by a culture which could express itself so differently in poetry and in the plastic arts. Humanity had long since possessed the epics of Homer as a lasting possession while the artists were still stammering inarticulately in their effort to portray Greek legends, and their gods were mere gorgons.

In the cabinet of the Nike you feel at home, and the museum stops. Marble loses its serious rigidity, and becomes an undulating surface; and the room turns into an eminently habitable apartment. Furniture from the pavilions in the park at Versailles would be in place here: comfortable carved wood armchairs with curving legs, covered with gay mythological stories in needlework or Aubusson tapestry. The reliefs would adorn the boudoir of a Pompadour: their language is French.

The sandal-maiden reminded me of a melody of Couperin—which made me think of Renoir, who loved Couperin. In Renoir's pictures naked girls play in the woods as familiarly as the sandal-maiden. There is no perceptible connection. It is odd how this affinity between Renoir and the Greeks, which seems so close especially in many of the later lyrical pieces, undergoes a change when you stand in front of the antique instead of Renoir. And



Sandaled Maiden on the frieze of the Nike Temple.  
*Acropolis Museum.*



Stele of Aristion.  
*National Museum.*



Archaic Statue.  
*Acropolis Museum.*

especially if you take, not his paintings, but those late pieces of sculpture, which ought, since we are discussing formal relations, to emphasize very strongly this side of Renoir's art which we find particularly congenial. You might almost believe here that the form is not the vehicle of this relationship.

Renoir's sculpture is well known to be the fruit of his old age. It contains the kernel which we can detect years before in the statuesque structure of his paintings without actually expecting to see it realized in plastic shape. The sculpture was achieved at the moment when the painter's color-sense had reached its most fluid form. If the authenticity of his art needed any support, it might gain it from this sculpture, so diametrically opposed to his pictorial form and yet so appropriate to his vision. I have always considered the relief with the Judgment of Paris as one of the sculptor's most classic works.

The comparison with the Nike reliefs rests on two points: elegance, which we habitually ascribe to the French, is on the side of the unknown Greek. His system of planes is carried much further than those of the painter turned sculptor whom we count among the impressionists; one might even say, judging hastily by the present condition of the reliefs, that Greek form was latently pictorial and shared all the charm of the surface-art and could therefore dispense with those purely plastic moments which define space. Both are Baroque; but while the Greek seems to stand at the close of his evolution and turns to a graceful rococo for which the antique motif merely provides the excuse for a singularly attractive game, the creator of the Judgment of Paris seems in all probability to stand hopefully at the outset of his career. His maidens frolic about in an ungainly fashion, and no Pompadour could use their structural solidity for her paneling. He regards the incident not merely as an artist, but much more with the single-mindedness of a primitive who sat at the feet of Homer, as the blind bard

who sang the tale of Paris and Helen. Carried away by what he heard, he fashioned the legend in clay.

Not much is lacking; and Renoir has been called more Greek than the Greeks of antiquity.

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## THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

It is called the Archæological Museum: a bad omen. Visual people can get little out of it, but psychologists can take their exercise in jumping like chamois. The results of our experiences on the Acropolis are completed in various ways. It is curious, the contact with Mycenæ, that astounding zero. The direct, but to my mind, brutal gestures of the heroic age, of which the sagas tell us, are nowhere to be found. Neither gods nor kings are visible: merely pretty trifles and bibelots. That is how, generally speaking, civilizations end their days. Of course that is partly due to the accidents of excavation; it is impossible to rebuild the crumbled ruins of the king's palaces. But every artistic expression bears, in addition to the signs of its own category, the marks of the general civilization to which it belongs. Mycenæ produces an ornamental art in full flower at a very early date. They started with the surface and never bothered with the form they were decorating. At the same period as this refined industrial art they produced sculpture which is unhandy to an astonishing degree. In the remains of the wall-paintings the same ornamental qualities prevail, but the portraits are grotesquely confused. The influence of Egypt is utterly misunderstood; it results in a theatrical style where compactness has turned into stiffness. There is none of the prototype's healthy realism. (The Egyptian room collected by dilettanti cannot of course give

you any proper notion of this.) On the contrary the famous head of a bull in Crete must be a triumph of dull naturalism. Thomas declared that it looks as if it had been made yesterday; and I can well believe it.

The bulging handles of the much-admired alabaster vase are grossly exaggerated ears and completely tasteless. There are, however, some pretty simple gold goblets in the collection. One dish of blackened silver with tiny gold circles or stars might be Empire. The most famous pieces, the two show-cups from Vaphio, are beautiful embossed work; but the bull-motifs, especially in one cup, are in such high relief that they spoil the contour of the vessel. Near by are a couple of dagger-handles with minute inlay like the fine work of the later Japanese. Not far off is a case of little gewgaws in baked clay.

So far as you can reduce it to order, it seems to have been mere window-dressing. At the beginning, the Greeks devoted themselves with remarkable exclusiveness to the surface, and this genesis seems to have prejudiced those activities which we have been accustomed, since the days of Winckelmann, to regard as their crowning achievement. Even when their builders and sculptors were at the height of their powers, they seem to have clung to the flat surface, in a sense which is very positive if difficult to determine; and only under the pressure of rare personalities did their genius overstep these limitations. Sculpture and architecture came from outside; the surface-art they discovered for themselves. In all archeological collections painted clay vases occupy quantitatively the first place; and they alone keep to a certain and a very high level. Aubrey Beardsley, with whom I, as a young man, pored over the cases in the British Museum, gave the vases the highest rank in Greece. In those days I thought the point of view perverse and regarded it merely as the expression of a draughtsman who was indebted to the Greek arabesques for his own specialty. Beardsley was by no means a stupid man. If by "the highest rank" you

mean the best compromise between intention and achievement and the exhaustion of all the possibilities of a given material, the criticism remains irrefutable; in which case Greek art must be symbolized not by an Athena, but by an amphora.

As they were surface-artists they succeeded best in relief. No Greek sculpture in the round has the beauty of certain of their stelæ. What gives all their sculpture in the round, even the best, an empty look, may be the lack of freedom, the obligation to express itself in a form which is not adequate from every point of view. Whether the adaptability of complete relief is actually possible in sculpture in the round, is another story. Nobody wants a colossus to dance. But if their inability to forget the peculiar properties of relief caused them to renounce sculpture in the round altogether, this would be no great loss. Superior cultures have emerged without this absolutism. Men have not got their faces in front for nothing. A body equally presentable on every side could only be set up as an aim in view by a sculpture that had cut itself adrift from architecture, or felt superior to it and capable of standing on its own feet. Again we are up against an autocracy. The same abstraction that harried the temple-builder misled the sculptor too.

The National Museum possesses a greater variety of archaic works than the Acropolis. The show-piece is the stele of Aristion, a life-size warrior in full array, stylized in accordance with all the rules of fashion. The style is heroic of an official stamp, with great precise contours which convey Attic militarism to us. The complete absence of spiritual content is made up for by the smartness of the outlines. The hero's person is a trunk with arms and thighs on which you can count the muscles and veins; and there its functions cease. These organs have about as much importance as orders and ribbons and are set down as implacably in relief as the folds and tucks in the hero's tunic. "Finely executed," says the archeologist in Baedeker, and it could not be better put. This

warrior matches the ladies on the Acropolis. Offenbach must have seen him when he wrote *La Belle Hélène*.

In the relief beside it, showing a runner collapsing, calligraphy is neglected, and the expressiveness at once increases. Perhaps the animated motif in itself helps the artist. He has to attend to something else beside decorations and rises to a greater height of objectiveness. Many details remain material, and as in so many works the excessively deep cutting of the relief is disturbing. The grave stele from Orchomenos, with the dog and the shepherd leaning on his staff, is more modest and keeps to the flat surface, thereby acquiring a superiority over almost all the reliefs in the museum.

The artists of the Apollo statues in the same hall shared the predilection of modern German sculptors for the prim forms of naked boys; already they had made the mistake of supposing that you must use an immature art to portray the charm of immaturity. Sculpture is content to repeat the graphic outline and leave space to others.

The Apollo of Melos goes to the other extreme, and under Egyptian influence looks for plasticity in stockiness. But it would be an insult to the Egyptians, even the decadent late ones, to compare them with this. Even the brutal fellows, who were put on to turn out the colossi of Rameses, still retained some sense of form; and much later weaklings under the Ptolemies were no whit inferior to the feminine impulses of the archaic Greeks. Incidentally, Greek sculpture reminds me at times of our own Middle Ages or Gothic or still oftener of Baroque; never, either in good things or bad, of Egypt, not even when the actual proofs of influence hit me in the face. By setting them side by side you do an injustice to both. The relationship of China to Japan, even in the smallest dose, is not in the least comparable. The positive differences have nothing to do with esthetics. The Greeks have no more in common with the Egyptians than have we, or any other people of the present day; and you might just as well set French art and Russian

alongside each other. There is no question of superiority or inferiority. Everything drove the Egyptian to stone and to sculpture; he was born for it. More and more I am coming to believe that the natural disposition of the Greeks lay in quite another direction and only the demands of their cult compelled them to be sculptors. Even in the noble composition of the Eleusinian relief—one of the few things where your anticipation is not followed by disenchantment—you can still find traces of pressure, and without the gray oxidization of the marble, which tones down the relief, it would be still more noticeable. Fantastic as it may sound, paradoxical as I find it myself in front of this great productiveness and the portentous effect of this production on all subsequent cultures, I believe that the Greeks were not born sculptors. Long habit produced in this gifted people two or three talented men and one single great man. It was not Phidias. That is also self-evident here. It is absurd that anybody could have confused the creator of the pediment-groups with the maker of the gold and ivory Athena! Since the latter is historically authenticated, the former must have had another name. I should find it easier to believe that Michelangelo and Benvenuto Cellini were identical. I have never believed in the gold and ivory colossus. Such a combination, in these dimensions, of materials which might well turn out all right on a small scale, would occur only to a Max Klinger. The museum possesses marble copies of the famous Athena. Whatever their shortcomings may be—and reduction is certainly not one of them—we can clearly detect that the original was a preposterous piece of applied art. "Colossal" applies only to its material cost. The goddess also served as a money-box and when times were bad the gold was carried off to the pawnbroker's. *Non olet.* The cult of the Athenians was overshadowed by unscrupulous practices worthy of a modern Greek merchant.

Thomas showed me a great bronze Apollo which they were restoring in the repair-shop at the museum: a Praxitelean affair.

It is not surprising that style degenerated into academicism by leaps and bounds. The Hermes of Andros, the Themis, the Poseidon of Melos, the Gaulish warrior—oh, you Hellenists! It wouldn't matter if this excessive admiration were confined to its own object, if they hadn't made this sickly falsehood into the corner-stone of civic propriety, in the name of truth and beauty, and poisoned whole generations of artists; while we, in our own past, possessed irrefutable indictments of it in every cathedral and in countless churches and cloisters. If you put a decent Swabian madonna in a room like this—it needn't even be one of the best—the slimy marble would blush for shame. Perhaps not, though. The specialists would always quibble until they found some twist that saved the continuity of the tradition. People who avoid the Dutch in the Uffizi have no right to enjoy the beauty of the Tuscans, and people who try to isolate the universal humanity of Rembrandt will never understand him.

Most of the grave-reliefs at the museum are plastic genre-pictures; many are dignified and worthy enough of their class, but that class is a theatrical hybrid. Complete dialogues take place on a niche-like stage. The real theater of the Greeks was quite different in style. The marble vases in the hall of the grave-reliefs are astoundingly formless. Tutchén's gaudy relics belong to an exalted period by comparison. Among all the bronzes I hardly found a single piece that was anything but commercial. Perhaps one loses one's eyes at last.

We enjoy the Tanagras and the other little terracottas. Whenever I go to the National Museum to revolve problems in my mind I regularly pause among the smaller things. Whenever you go near a case, a herd of school boys are on your tracks and you can't keep the crowd at bay. They shriek and laugh and tread on your toes, put out their tongues and crack foolish jokes. The girls behave better. Charming little creatures stand some distance away

and flirt with the big man; they know quite well how their little frocks look and swing their hips to and fro. Suddenly they twitch their tunics with a finger here and a finger there and break into a dance. The little goddesses sway backwards and forwards, and you hold your breath.

By a flight of fancy you might call them the *Vieux Saxe* of ancient Greece; and you would be perfectly wrong, for what they have in common, the reproduction of the large on a small scale, is trifling compared with the differences. It would be more accurate to call them two opposites, quite apart from material considerations. The contrast is social. Rich folk stand behind Meissen porcelain; behind the terracotta stands the people. It would be better to compare this popular sculpture with chap-books, except that their artistic level is much higher. Tanagras have a perfectly secure position. They alone give that convincing cross-section of the period for which one always hoped, though it is not necessary to come so far for that purpose; they illustrate that peaceful, natural development which is not determined by the accidental appearance of genius. Considering the quantity at our disposal it hardly seems appropriate to invoke the now common conception of personality. If there were hundreds of terracottas instead of thousands we should reverence them as the humorous by-product of genius. It is a question whether the quantity does not enhance their value. In these things we find the artistic dowry of the race in its original form; and the terracottas stand even nearer to the heart of the people than the vases, are still freer of every artistic restriction, have a peculiar spontaneity of their own. We recognize the flexible talent, with its predisposition towards relief. We also recognize its limitations, and need only compare them with the equally popular clay figures of the T'ang period in China, which have the same tiny dimensions. The plastic handling is equally natural, and their difference in form corresponds simply to a difference of temperament. The superficial improvisation of the terracottas teaches us

just as much about the mobility and loquaciousness of the Greeks as the gentle roundness of the T'ang figures about the circumspection of the Asiatic. The official votive sculpture in a Greek temple stands on one side in an empty atmosphere. The marble statue affords an insight into the social forms of a single class: a limited insight into a limited sphere. The small terracottas are much more instructive. The cases are full of citizens, artisans, beggars, lights of love, philosophers, orators, comedians, stout girths and scraggy necks, sly and stupid fellows, topers, gluttons, pickpockets of all sorts: a Greek *comédie humaine* of the streets. There are all manner of gods amongst them. The Athenians behave exactly like the great ones in marble, and here we have no complaints to make about their fashions. The folds and tucks in their clothes, the ringlets in their hair become mere reflections of the daylight. The light material achieves the lightest possible poise. Incidentally it would be as well to make sure about the area over which these trifles were evolved. The complicated relationship of Greece with the Etruscans, whose statues interest us more today than any other ancient sculpture on Italian soil, may perhaps be elucidated in various important directions by these little terracottas.

If justice were done, the terracottas would belong to the holy of holies, and the big dolls would have to be content with such consequences as falls to the lot of applied arts. Most marble statues would be little more than the large-size *Vieux Saxe* of well-to-do Greeks.

If the Berlin ethnologist, Le Coq, is right in the deductions he draws from his remarkable finds in Central Asia, the Greeks contributed to Chinese art. That would not depreciate the value of the Chinese, as fanatical students of the Far East pretend, but would rather enhance it, for the way in which they disposed of a contact which was thoroughly alien to their way of doing things really speaks highly for the strength of their artistic sense. One can

learn even from a feeble teacher. The relationship of Greece to Egypt is less positive.

Supposing the influence really exists, and I do not doubt it, that proves that the classic heights of Chinese art, which in its noblest works seems like a perfect Europe, are not accidental, but the result of an important development which speaks for the humanity and the logic of the history of art. At the same time we must admit, as another possibility, the remarkable similarity of many Egyptian works to Chinese sculpture, especially in their common dependence on a sense of solidity and compactness. Greece may perhaps have bridged the gap between the Far South and the Far East.

When I reconsider how far the Greek atmosphere extended I always feel suspicious of my disillusion, and I am ready to ascribe the apparent poverty of the works in the museum to my own blindness. Then I run back again for the tenth time in search of conversion. What are my objections based upon and what can I produce except subjective emotions and arguments based on inadequate comparisons? Only my eye: the eye of a ridiculously isolated individual. This art, on whose works I am casting aspersions, has conquered the earth. It would be a foolish prevarication to ascribe the universal effect to a few selected works. The Greek style has had a gigantic influence. This syntax has been given to people in the farthest East; and has flattened out boundaries which seemed inaccessible to every other influence, even the prodigious cleft between ancient and Christian manners. Europe became a colony of Athens, and traces of this ancient past survive to this very day; and these traces strike us as signs of the highest nobility. Every piece of evidence that allows us to convert a vague mistrust into a rational objection is Greek evidence, in the last instance. Every fold in the robe, every smile on the face of our saints is filled with Greek form. What would the greatest art of our day be without Greece?

This realization is not confined to the history which delineates

the process of rise and decline in the background apart from more positive interests, but masters our feeling, becomes my own feeling just as much as the reluctant eye is my own eye. The disillusionment of the visual man leaves his dream-picture undisturbed. While the Apollos stiffen and the Athenas turn into ladies of fashion, I have only to think of Poussin's Flora or a naked Venus by Renoir or Bonnard's Daphnis and Chloe, in order to reassure myself of the unforgettable spirit of Hellas. As you look at the Ganymede of Marées the ether rustles and the eagle's wings bear the idol up to the stars. The metopes of our Parthenon emerge from hasty chalk sketches of Amazons and leaping steeds. That is perhaps the solution of the whole riddle; and those who are afraid had best stay at home. No real Acropolis, had there never been those bombs of Morosini and his Lüneburger lieutenant, could replace the one we dreamed of. People of many generations and centuries and thousands of years have corresponded with an invisible Venus. Their fancy filled in the gaps between them and was never wrong. That is worth noting: they were never wrong. The academic Apollos and the dolled-up Athenas are quite certainly not masterpieces, and the people whose criticism is corrupted by an idol do not believe in it or love it. So I haven't come here in vain after all, and have no cause to complain of those bitter hours in desolate museums. Even the Church of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the church at Bethlehem and the stuffed beasts in the trees by the Jordan have their good side. The inadequacy of such witnesses strengthens our symbolic picture, and the visitor may even find a savor in his disillusion because it stiffens his resistance.

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## THROUGH THE PELOPONNESUS

WE have dragged ourselves away and are not repenting it. Be the columns of the Greeks what they will, let their torsos and their heads and their ringlets and everything else fail us, the country remains an indisputable fact and an unmixed blessing. Until now we were narrow-minded enough to think only of the antique, never of Greece, an artificial view for which of course we had to pay the penalty. The Greeks themselves take a healthier view of it. The Greek loves his country; nobody is more fanatically attached to his native soil. They live by hundreds of thousands in strange parts of the earth. Every day we meet middle-class people who have been for six or ten years in America and talk a queer sort of English. Egypt swarms with Greeks. Far down South they keep their shops; and Asia Minor is full of them. Everywhere they make money without worrying about it and are as much feared in business as Syrians and Jews; but for the most part they come back to their own country and help it both at home and abroad. There is a Hellenism which has many traits in common with Zionism; there is a Greek's penny which pays for armorclads and flying machines. The generosity of the rich completely outdoes those splendid votive gifts which the ancients offered in the temples; in that way you cheat the government, and juggling with taxes is the same game here as it is everywhere else. If it depends on a love for their country, the

future of the Greeks is absolutely assured. Their attachment does not affect the museums; they let foreigners excavate here and nobody minds when Greek things appear on the foreign market. It is rather curious, because among the great European amateurs in London and Paris and Alexandria there are rich Greeks who collect all manner of things. The greatest collector of Chinese objects in Europe has a Greek name. On the other hand, they are great connoisseurs of their own landscape and feel at home in every corner of the Peloponnesus.

We want to be more Greek than the Greeks, and get our teeth into bits of marble without giving a thought to the country. The various Apollos and Athenas, and Phidias and Scopas and Myron and Praxiteles, are part of the vocabulary of every educated person. Who knows Nauplia? The land is more Greek than the whole of Greek art: not just one landscape, but the one and only land, the loveliest and most varied in Europe, Nature's real success. Hellas-Acropolis! We fill our ears with the compound word, for Hellas seems too simple. For the sake of one hill among a thousand we forget heaven and earth.

On our journey along the coast we had to call a halt at every turn. The one quality in which Athenian art is painfully lacking was here present to an extreme degree: I mean, abundance. Our eyes overflowed. Abundance not only of changing outlines such as one sees on any journey by sea in Italy or along the coasts of France and Spain; but abundant effects of depth. Nature in Greece is an ideal sculptor. The richness of the shore along which you sail is repeated in the outlines and the hilly surfaces of a multitude of islands, so that not the earth but the sea becomes the face of nature. It is not the water over which we came to the Piræus from Asia Minor, far less the endless sea on our northern coasts which begins in time to weary us. When you cross the high seas, after the first day the ocean becomes a more or less pleasant substance which becomes part of the deck-chair in which you doze (if the passage

is smooth), a hygienic interlude between lunch and dinner. The Greek sea is not an endless element, but a shape, a form of visible dimensions, and its riches depend upon the infinite variety of its moods. The liquid azure, susceptible of every shade of blue, forms a chain of lakes, an archipelago with many limbs; and you get the impression of an earth, with all its countless green hills and reddish valleys and the ground itself over which you glide, all borne upon the waters. You fancy you have already seen the same formation somewhere else and are puzzled to know where it can have been; was it in Venice?—or in Finland? And then you suddenly discover that your experience came to you in no other land—or at all events in no visible land through which you could journey—but rather in some rhythmic archipelago belonging to some other organ of sense. Such ideas occur to you at times on a journey and presumably have something to do with the movement. You imagine this flight from island to island, this playing with the water, this hide and seek behind rocks and crags, as though you had once heard it all in a kind of musical sequence; and however senseless it may seem you strain your ear to catch the rhythm.

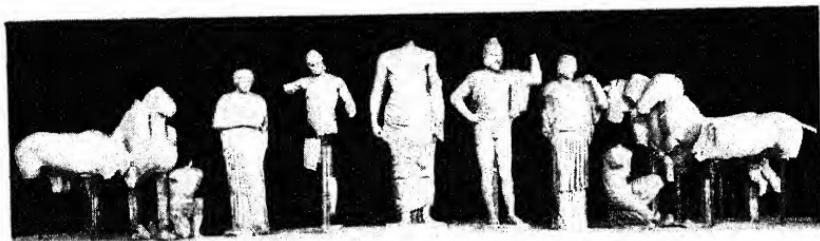
Babuschka is reading, undisturbed by my thoughts; now and then she casts a perfunctory glance at the landscape. That is how English people generally travel. She has got the *Odyssey*; quite the correct thing to read. Once I took the book from her; it's Rudi Schröder's translation. In order to be quit of the confounded buzzing in my ears I told her about him. When he was doing the translation we lived together in a villa in the Genthinerstrasse: four rooms, of which he had the biggest. He used to lie in bed till mid-day—it was really our sofa—among his dictionaries and papers. Paula complained about the sofa. In between whiles he played Mozart in his pyjamas with his head thrown back and designed lampshades for patrons in Bremen which he perforated with needles. This led me on to Bremen, to Woldes, to the *Goldene Wolke* and the little barman with his creaking boots.

"It's really remarkable how well it goes with this!" I remark, pointing to the blue. Babuschka is still at Bremen and asks about the *Goldene Wolke*. But I meant the *Odyssey*.

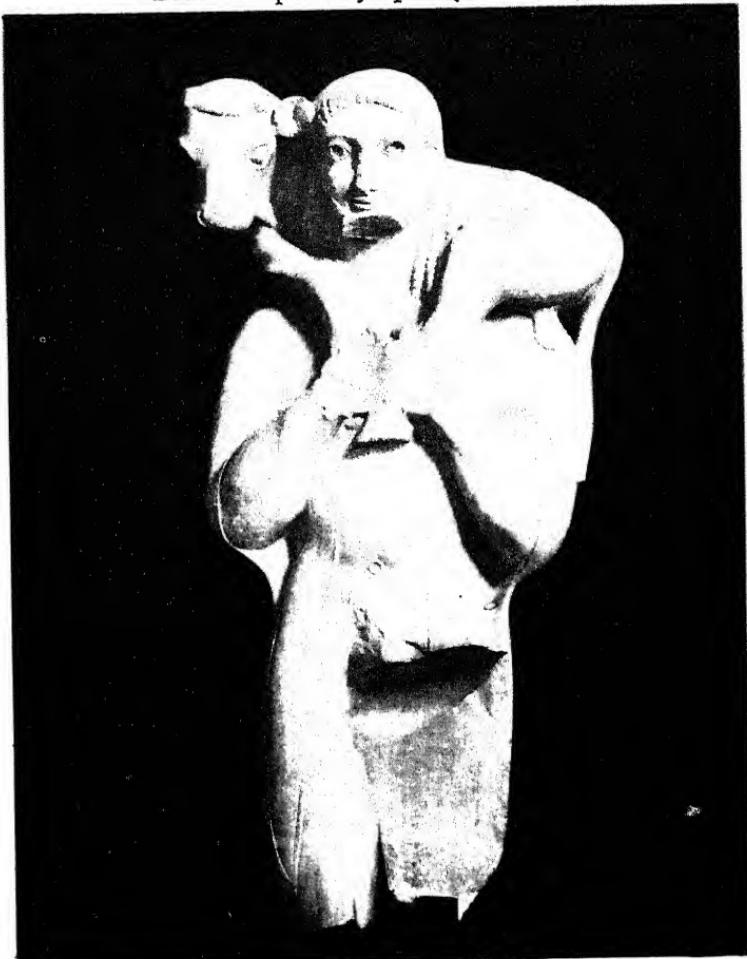
We are staying at the nice hotel on the square by the sea and have a balcony from which Babuschka is drawing the view. The bay ought to be done into hexameters, with silvery metaphors. From our square a rectangular bit of a quay juts out into the sea and forms the harbor. There is a pile of timber on the quay waiting for the steamer. Children are clambering about over the wood. Over there a narrow belt of trees lines the shore, and then come the hills. In the middle of the water, a bit to our left, lies the fat medieval castle called Burzi. The clumsy round walls occupy the whole of the tiny island. It's very nice to have a fat Burzi like that in front of you when you're having tea.

Suddenly the wind rose and the scene changed in five minutes. No more question of silvery metaphors. Now comes the gray salt sea which covered the hair and beard of the godlike sufferer with rime and cast him on the rocks. Babuschka has to move indoors. A real sea lashes the fat Burzi and breaks over the quay with the timber. A sudden squall capsizes the pile, and now the breakers are doing their best to sweep the planks away. People run screaming out of doors, and the belly of an earth-shaking god rises threateningly out of the water.

In the evening Poseidon was appeased once more. We wandered about the little town. People were still at work. You see more intelligent faces here than in a street in Athens. The street leads to a pretty square at the foot of the tall fort Palomidhi. The walls bear the coat of arms with the lion of St. Mark. Nauplia must have gone to the Venetians in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Venice is as active here as Berlin is in Venice. We wander back to the sea, take the small path between the rocks along the spit of land; above us we have the steep castle of Itsch-Kale, and below

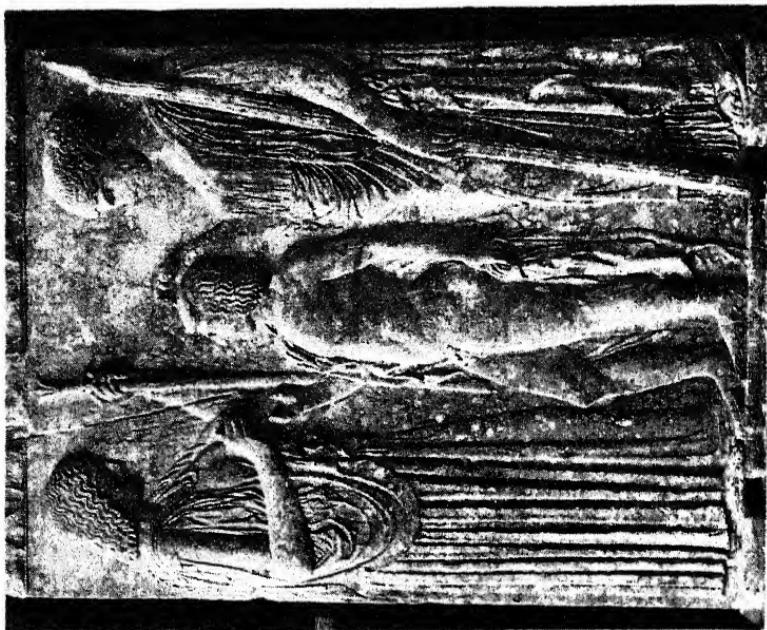


Zeus Temple. Olympia. (Pediment)

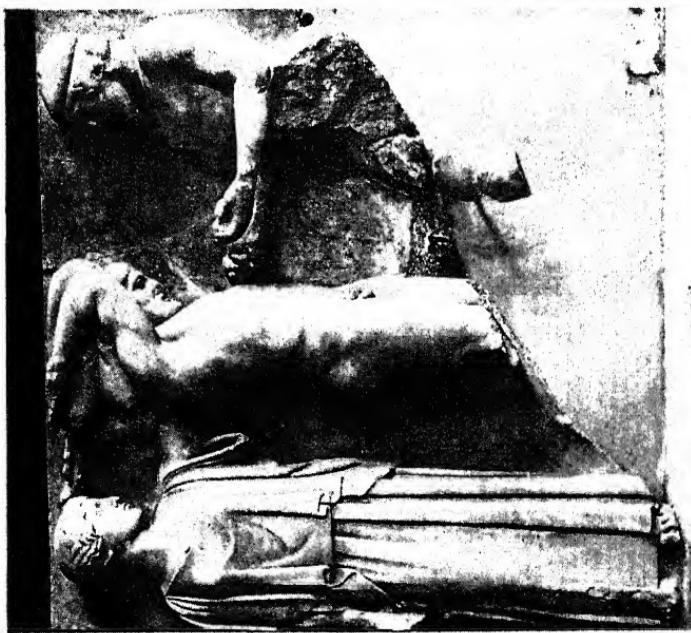


Moschophoros. *Acropolis Museum.*

Eleusinian Relief. *National Museum.*



Zeus Temple. Olympia. The Labors of Hercules.  
(Metope)



us the breakers. You have to walk in Indian file and conversation ceases. You often think you have come to the end, but the path always wriggles round the corner again. Round every bend there lowered the one-eyed grimace of Polyphemus. Babuschka said the same thing afterwards.

Every day we make expeditions from Nauplia into the country. Yesterday we did Mycenæ and Tiryns. The lion gate is not art of a high order, but makes a different impression from the toys in the museum. The clumsy fellows who lived here had to protect themselves from their neighbors the Cyclopes. The great graves, which are ascribed to Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, have nothing of the artistry that led to the Acropolis, but they have a Homeric caliber. At all events it won't seem foolish after this to believe such stories. You step through mighty stone slopes which provide the only ornament for the great wall. In the bowels of the earth a beehive building is hollowed out. Here at last you strike the primitive. It has as little to do with archaic stylization as a Romanesque vault has to do with St. Peter's. The form arises exclusively out of concrete requirements. The building is meant for safety and protection and is not there to be looked at. Thus the room is formed. You would have to pick such a beehive to bits down to the very last stone before you brought the room to nought, and that would be a triumph of skill, for the blocks at the entrance are not a bit inferior in size to the biggest Egyptian slabs. Except for space the architecture needs no comment. The interior fashioned, it seems, out of encircling walls made of hewn stone and dry earth, the symbol of the inner life of man, on which all true culture rests, is the kernel of architecture. The joints in the huge blocks fit; the walls are mathematically curved. "Well-built," says Homer.

Stirred by its objectiveness, one is inclined to overrate such a beehive, because one has seen too many unused accessories. Yet it is impossible to overrate the conception. I can trace such a beehive back to ancient Egypt and forward to Ravenna, St. Mark's and

Gothic. Our church arose out of just such a beehive. Incidentally, they already used domes in Egypt, and they have recently found a real vault dating from the Old Kingdom.

Possibly these vaults were not—or not exclusively—graves, but “fragrant treasure-chambers,” as the epic says, and they brought there the spoils of their profitable friendly journeys. When a Tele-machus came they set torches in a ring and presented him with golden vessels. The lively descriptions of the saga ring absolutely true. People think they can get round the historical facts, while in much later buildings—the show-places of authenticated history—such tangible evidence leaves us in the lurch. Homer built with solid blocks. Why are none of the many Homeric metaphors merely ornamental in effect?

We had breakfast at a little pub on the country road, where we and an English savant, who had arrived just before us, were served by a girl with black eyes and black hair, full and round, with magnificent teeth; she did not serve us like people who pay, but like guests. The first things she put before us were water and flowers. She was a sturdy, broad-shouldered type with trim thighs à la Maillol; not in the least dainty, without frills and ringlets; a bit clumsy, rather, but kind, with that human communicativeness that often helps a stranger out in Russia when he knows nothing of the language.

The people here are uncommonly agreeable to look at and to get on with. They are nearly all well-grown, healthy folk, friendly and care-free and always ready for a laugh. In the fortnight we've been here we haven't seen a single ugly girl. In spite of their dark hair they often have a remarkably Nordic look, since one associates robustness with our latitudes. They are easy of address and full of natural charm. We had been prepared for a mixed Levantine type, degenerate and heavily tinged with their servile past. I have seen no signs of it.

Traveling in this country is never particularly comfortable; and

outside Athens you never find hotels with Mr. Coolman and the Behn family and the inevitable dancing after dinner. However, you needn't expect nothing but beggars. There is none of that glaring discrepancy between hotel-people and natives that Egypt suffers from. Smart people clearly don't come here: what an Eldorado! There must be a good deal of distress, of course. Turkish atrocities have filled the country brimful of refugees; between Athens and the Piraeus there are long rows of huts. But you notice little in Athens and nothing in the country; everywhere people seem to find their lot endurable. We spent most of our time, I suppose, in Messenia and Arcadia. Arcady is no idle fancy. The raisin fields were bursting with fruitfulness.

Landscape and people fulfill our expectations. Of course you interpret every trait according to your own taste and take every nanny-goat and billy-goat for antique fauna; every shepherd is a Daphnis and every shepherdess a Chloe, and every spring bubbles over with a Greek lyric. It is much harder to fit in the marbles. The friendly smile on the face of every Attic maiden is good; who could resist such amiability? But the statues refuse to play up. Regular intervals are by no means absent from their sculpture; and Richard Strauss, whom we met in Athens, interpreted this as music, endowing them in his enthusiasm with his own tonal sensibility, so that, as in photographs, the emptiness of the model was an actual advantage. It struck me that the intervals, especially in the golden age, were disposed too contrapuntally. There is an absence of development. Nietzsche, who has tried to trace back the birth of tragedy to music, would have called this shortcoming the Dionysiac element. And little as the solution of the problem may be assisted by this Apollo-Dionysos antithesis excogitated by a thinker who was not very susceptible to plastic art, still Nietzsche's intuition seems to have been not unaware of the natural superiority of Greek poetry over Greek art. He was mistaken only in generalizing this deficiency and assigning to music the absolute hegemony. The

capacities of plastic art in the realm of decorum aroused his suspicions. There still remains that achievement, for which we can never be sufficiently grateful to him, of having erected the concept of art opposite to the concept of science. As with Winckelmann, we can sweep away the mistakes, and there still will remain his keen instinct which can always be of service to us. It is always possible, after all, to ascribe the unmusical nature of Greek sculpture to the predominance of a formalist science at the expense of the dream or myth, so long as we don't drag in Richard Wagner. The renewal of the myth was perpetually achieved by their continuously objective attitude toward life.

There is more of Greece in Greek poetry from Homer to the tragedians, and especially in Aristophanes, and right on down to the latest prose-writers, than there is in the whole of Greek plastic art. This has preserved only one of the many facets, whereas poetry has them all, and in Homer they are all united. The oldest epic, whether the form in which we now possess it was given it in the days of Pericles or even later, remains in effect the youngest. Even today we still read it not only for the sake of its Greek music, but with the actual excitement aroused by a problem that closely concerns us. It is the story of early Egyptian sculpture all over again: the artist's incisiveness rends the veil of the centuries and we see people we can talk to, a family, our family. The *Odyssey* is engraved on the heart of a Greek as is *Don Quixote* on a Spaniard's, Voltaire on a Frenchman's, Faust on a German's; and we almost feel inclined to assign to Homer's objectivity and his musical sequences a degree of completeness above all the rest. In the songs of the *Odyssey* we rediscover the Peloponnesus and the isles, and the sea glitters and flows, surges and whispers. In the *Iliad* the other element glows, flickers, and flames with a dramatic vehemence that takes your breath away. Water and fire are the objects of poetry. The nature of the *Odyssey*, with its quieter transitions and comparisons, comes closer to us; and as one travels through, Greece

adds a new suggestiveness to it every day. The figures remind us more and more of the Greek of today, with his heroism and his sobriety, a mixture of magnanimity and crafty calculation, of enthusiasm and dejection. People talk a lot and praise assiduously and use words to conceal their thoughts. When occasion arises, they cheat in Olympus and on earth too, if need be, but gods and men henceforth deduct it all for the sake of music's account. The relations of the Olympians with each other and with men express the social instincts of a people who could not take distinctions of rank very seriously. So many gods step forth, and so few priests. A privy councillor in his office is more difficult of approach than Zeus in Olympus. King and swineherd are good friends. Hospitality is always to the fore. Almost more constant than their belief in the immortal gods is their respect for a guest, and both are observed with like solemnity. Sit down, sacrifice with us, eat and drink, and then tell us who you are. It is a simple and striking affair. The *Odyssey* is the epic of hospitality; and every reader feels his heart invited to take up its dwelling there, and goes on his way richly rewarded. An incessant coming and going forms the rhythmic articulation of the poem, and is once again the still valid symbol of the habitual comings and goings of the Greek of today. In America, in Asia and Africa the *Odyssey* continues, and still the wanderer returns at last to his home.

In the theater at Epidauros one has some trouble in bridling one's fancy. The ruin instantly comes to life. I never could imagine the Athenians on the Acropolis: how they got up, to begin with; and then, even when they were standing on the steps or between the pillars of the Propylæa, they seemed like waxworks, like pathetic lay-figures, brazen faces. Of course one easily wipes out one's recollections of the rubbishy pictures of yesterday, but one has nothing better to substitute for them. The people in the temple remain invisible, scared by its abstractness. Everything human

turns into a tiny mite. Fancy, which sees a Europa on every bull along the coast and nymphs dancing in every clearing in the wood, runs dry in the Parthenon. Its completeness leaves nothing to the imagination. Only look! You have more than enough to do. Look and improve your mind and pull yourself together. We are pained when we see tourists lounging round the peristyle; their mere presence strikes us as an offence against taste.

On the stone benches at Epidaurus you sit with the crowd. The rigid semicircle of steps is thickly peopled. Whether they really are ancient Greeks is beside the point. Perhaps I am one too. At all events no arm or heroic leg stands out, no classic nose, nor artistic tangle of hair. Religious excitement drives out these trifles, and the masks in the drama down below rob every one of the gestures he has brought with him. The hazardousness of the scene on the stage which is only lent a tangible scaffolding by the whistling waves of the dithyramb, entrals the spectators and binds them together. Archaic rigidity of every sort is here permissible.

The practical requirements of the open site naturally affect the spectator. One can hardly speak of style; only the weeds in the cracks of the stone decorate the steps. Do we admire the theater merely because our fancy does the obvious thing and takes its place on the empty benches? I have never found an empty auditorium very alluring. If you go one morning into the old theater at Bayreuth or the golden *bonbonnière* in the Residenz at Munich their rococo rivets your gaze but doesn't enlist your sympathy. One ought to have deprecated such a freak of fancy as an offence against taste. At Epidaurus there was no dandified comedy of manners. The dithyramb climbed directly on to the stage off the Greek mountain-side and surrounded the semicircle. You believe you can see a sort of natural theater that seems to our dream vision the worthiest setting for a stage-play; a setting sought after by the dark imaginings of our desire. It is as though we were in a cathedral, where even the unbeliever is induced to kneel in prayer, were it only to

share in the dithyramb with the rest. Did the like ever happen in any Greek temple? We are tempted to think that they brought their marble votive-offerings to the temple not from some inner compulsion but in order to be looked at and allowed to exercise their dignity. In the theater they knew their place and were pious. The site gives the architecture its enduring power. If the theater were not laid, as by Apollo, under the blue sky, with the long stretches of sloping hill for a background, surrounded by the other mountains, as by side wings, if trees and branches were not there as supers and if the light did not play its part with the rest, our fancy would scarcely have so easy a task. The sun hands us the opera-glasses, adorns the bare circle of the orchestra, opens the entrances to the proscenium, enlarges the ruined stage. Without our imagination this would remain mere ornament; yet what do I know of the Greek theater? If Thomas were examining me I should get an awful wigging.

Our car was waiting at the building where they have arranged the museum; and the chauffeur, accustomed to the usual routine, did not include it in the entertainment. Another heap of ruins in the neighborhood was waiting to be visited. The museum contains the ornamental remains of the old temple at Epidauros. A cold douche was waiting for our fancy. This frieze with the lion heads, whose back teeth may all be numbered, these overburdened cornices and capitals and the frightful panelling in the ceiling! Naturalistic rosettes are planted in the panels, and only the electric bulbs are missing. Skillful hands have chiselled these things in stone instead of casting them in papier mâché: jewelers' hands, which imagined that a cornice was a trinket to be worn on the watch-chain. They served rich people whose religion was a frivolous affair. Their capitals were the product of capitalism. The stucco Friedrichstrasse of my young days is here reproduced in noble material. This antique stuff is really worse, for it belongs, not to a beer-hall or a hosier's shop, but to a temple. I should like

to have one of the waterspouts from Notre-Dame here. Even on a Doric architrave superfluous ornament was already beginning. Everything that we know of the way it was painted suggests that color spoiled the best characteristic of a Doric capital, its simplicity. The Ionic column has already ceased to carry anything, but is merely a decorative adjunct and in the Corinthian disorder the capital is about as architectural as a bit of carved meerschaum. The Italian Renaissance was not a fall from grace. When force departed with the Cinquecento, taste and a feeling for material still survived; many classic pilasters in the old parts of Paris surpass their originals.

Marble, that medium that lends itself only too readily to the abstract, led the Greeks to an art of plaster. The severe beehives remained an ineffectual accessory. Too quickly they came to know of the discoveries of the Egyptians. Between the early cyclopean buildings and the Doric temple the native connecting link is missing. Eclecticism interposed and overburdened even the age of Pericles. A hundred years later there is hardly anything but rubbish.

The common comparison of the relations between Egypt and Greece leaves out of account one element to which a misguided idealism attaches too little importance: I mean material. The Egyptians were stonecarvers. That determined their style and was actually of greater consequence. Stone kept them straight long after their art had ceased to be creative. Even in their decline they remembered the pyramids. We turned away in disgust from the temples of Rameses, because we had the tradition of the early dynasties before our eyes. Today we are almost sighing for Karnak. Those barbarously overloaded temples will always yield a mighty kernel. A Greek temple, on the other hand, stands or falls according to its completeness. We shall never be able to gauge properly the purely creative part played by Greece owing to our scanty knowledge of the relations between Greece and its predecessors, especially as we lack much important evidence for

periods of Egyptian art which we have to regard as classic. Since at present the Doric style is regarded as exclusively Greek, the Greek contribution is rated altogether too high. The Acropolis did not spring from the head of Zeus. On the contrary, we must always celebrate the step from the buildings of the New Kingdom to the Parthenon as the transition from brutal strength to domineering orderliness, as the triumph of a higher culture. Compared with the later Egyptians, the Greeks were, as architects, far more artistic and far more spiritual, but their spirituality was achieved at the expense of richness of content. You might say that they did not build with their hands, but with their heads. They were born for things which, to the Egyptians, remained shadowy and abstract.

Humanity has shared out its problems in a marvelously economical way. To the Egyptians we are indebted for the discovery of how to use space. Their buildings and their statues are above all plastic, though we are yielding uncritically to their overpowering dimensions when we ascribe to them no more than a single style. On the other hand, their poetry is the thinnest of filigree-work, stylized ornament without backbone or structure. Among the Greeks, space is flattened out into silhouette, and sculpture turns into relief. They preferred their art in written form; to which end they created tragedy, which embraces the whole earth.

The most cogent undertaking would be a campaign against science: to determine its ravages in every civilization; to denounce its lascivious concubinage with art, which can only be called a public scandal; to show what is hidden behind continuity and completeness and to expose this mania for collecting every accessible lion-mask ornament and describing the whole assemblage of lion-masks as antiquity. They divide up a country, a people, a creative complex into the tiniest possible particles and then inundate it to such an extent with these particles that the complex, *qua* country, people, or social ordinance, disappears. They stop at the capital

instead of the column, at the column instead of the temple, at the temple instead of art, at art instead of humanity. Their colleagues in the other faculties have nothing better to do than to pick Homer's epics to bits in order to prove that the poet never existed, because a lion-mask here or there was corrected in later times. Now the learned do at least seem to have arrived at the conclusion that the creator was a poet. It's the same with Christ.

Thomas turned the spear in the wound and described me as a renegade without naming the standard which he accused me of deserting. He declared it would not be too much to call my objections to the antique not only groundless but positively subversive.

My objections to the antique! So merely looking at the antique is subversive; and it is treachery to say that the antique is something of more value than an arbitrarily limited geographical diagram, to discover Doric columns on the Nile, Greek formation in the stone saints of a northern cathedral, and Greek freedom in every gracious shape, and to own a clean and orderly vision of the antique which rises above lion-masks.

The other day I met a historian of the new school with Thomas, and we talked about Hegemann's *Fridericus*, the book we used to read in our little boat on the way up to Nubia. The professor observed that what this architect gave out as his own invention had long been known to them all.

The tone in which he said "architect" squashed the author of *Fridericus* as flat as a pancake; and I hastened to assure the professor that I regarded Hegemann's profession as an architect as the most positive safeguard for the validity of his conclusions, which in any case did not claim the halo of an invention, since they were based on documentary evidence. Clearly Hegemann was indebted to architecture for his insight, his knowledge of what was important. This piece of knowledge was not identical with the science of our professional historians, otherwise the extremely fragmentary Prussian legend would not continue to be repeated in schools and

high schools and on a hundred and one more or less serious occasions. On account of these lacunas only practicing architects ought to be appointed to fill chairs of history.

Thomas suddenly sprang up. He could not understand why it was necessary for us Germans to belittle a heroic figure which was dear to us and which Menzel had glorified once for all with exemplary accuracy. The gentleman's arguments were the merest trifles. His spectacles glistened.

My sweet Thomas! My funny Thomasissimus, do just look! Suddenly he was all for the strictest synthesis and repudiated visionary history. Not only had he never read Hegemann, but he regarded our suggestion that he might have read him as an unpleasant aspersion on him. Even unread, Hegemann's arguments were insignificant. You could pick Homer to bits and call Christ pathological and Dostoievski a ravisher and a murderer; but old Fritz was *hors concours*—for us Germans, at all events. The discussion threw sudden shafts of light over the dark landscape. But supposing it had occurred, not just to Hegemann, but to another or many others, and not only to us Germans but to people all over the place, to reckon the real Frederick, the bold adventurer, the man of might, the misanthrope, the master of intrigue, this mixture of artist, king and Marquis of Keith, as greater and incomparably more interesting than the bewigged father of his country and Prussian hero? What then?

Thomas did not deign to answer me, being absorbed by feelings which were not propitious to me. I must confess I found him almost attractive, partly because it comforted me to catch him, partly because however wrong he was when I caught him, he always displayed a certain human warmth. If he really practiced archeology as a hero-cult not as a science, if these people could really imagine a Greece—any Greece, however improbable—as a living whole, it would be easier to bear with them. Their most fatal error is their low temperature.

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## OLYMPIA

WE are staying alone in the roomy guest-house and are thinking with some satisfaction of the crowds in Athens. There isn't even a single archeologist here. A bush has thrust its red flowers in at my window. Gentle hills with cypresses and pines soothe your eye. The Alpheios flows quietly through a secluded valley, and more silvery hills mount up again on the other side. The landscape is not so utterly different from our own as that of Egypt, for instance, where you can't take a step without feeling that you're in another quarter of the globe; it is merely that nature is somewhat less generous in the North. She gets along with one valley or one hill—whereas here there have to be three or four—and draws our outlines more sharply and doesn't allow herself little luxuries like planes. It wouldn't be fair to accuse her of niggardliness, for she has treated us generously in the matter of rivers and large forests. In our forests you can walk and dream and find shade on every side. From a distance, however, our woods look like the fine crop of hair on a healthy thick skull. We are treated like peasants in wooden clogs. In Greece they have taken more care. The vegetation is sketched in with the tip of a pencil; and the outline of every hill betrays the hand of an artist who worked, not to please a mob for practical reasons, but to satisfy himself, even lavishing his care on the remotest corners where nobody can follow him. Claude had

a hand in it, and so had Corot: Claude in the great smooth sea, and Corot in those precise little corners inland and in the figures. Neither set foot on Greek soil, but they sighted Greece from the Roman Campagna or from Ville d'Avray, though you often fancy you can determine the exact spot where their easel stood. The illusion is due to the circumstance that the important thing about this landscape is that instead of gripping it tight you can let it go free.

One procrastinates somewhat in doing one's duty toward works of art, and is disillusioned. In the presence of such a landscape composed by the hand of genius it would be hard to pay due attention even to a Claude or a Corot; it is a bit easier to cope with sculpture, since the contrast of the rigid material disposes of all substitutes that might try to encroach upon one. It is always a question of music and rhythm.

The craftsmen who made the pediment-groups are far more sympathetic than the archaic manufacturers, who were content with supplying costumes and coiffures, with a smile thrown in gratis. These people took their business more seriously; they were rough sons of the land, simple and unspoilt. I see them in wooden clogs. They went in for a good rough and tumble with the Muses, like young peasants, who had turned artist in town and kept their countrified ways even as professors. Since the pediment is three-cornered and highest in the middle, that is the place for Apollo, the god of the festival; and since people want the famous fight between the Lapithæ and Centaurs, the thing to do is to place these beast-men on either side of the god of the festival, to act as pendants when seen from a distance. They manage as best they can, and let the combatants belabor each other with their hard fists. Other figures are occupied in watching the affray, kneeling and finally lying down, in proportion as the space in the pediment dwindles down to a point. The devil alone could manage such a triangle. Repose was prescribed for the other pediment: Zeus and various

gods and heroes. Again they haven't wasted much thought over the composition, but have merely arranged the people in question in a row. Zeus, as the greatest, naturally comes in the middle; then the others, to right and left, dwindling in size according to their importance. But for the horses it would have been an awkward business. The figures present themselves like actors in front of the curtain, and *Œnomaus* beckons: This way please, gentlemen!

It is an odd mixture of the rustic and the academic. They could never have devised this out of their own heads, but followed the examples in the town. Fortunately, however, the dryness of the academy did not come through. Many different hands have been traced. Some of them had talent; you notice it especially in two kneeling figures. All found the marble an obstacle. If they had been allowed to do it in clay or in the soft poros-stone of their forbears, the gods might have turned out a bit more human. Always the same unfortunate passion for marble.

The remains of the metopes are mainly picture-puzzles for the archeologist. The famous Atlas metope has simplicity to recommend it. That is how children look at history; and if a childlike attitude can help a Claude or a Corot, why not the Olympia artist too? It must appear, however, in the form as well. Here it is confined to the composition; and the execution in marble is undertaken by a full-grown craftsman with all too academic propensities.

There is a beautiful work outside the series from the temple: the Nike of Paionios, which is several decades later. It hasn't the vigor of that tempestuous Nike on the staircase in the Louvre, the only work that amply compensates for your disappointment at a thousand insufficiencies; it has most of the easy grace of the sandal-maiden on the Acropolis, of the quieter florid baroque which the Frenchmen Goujon and Germain Pilon inherited from Greece, and of which a last flicker descended to our own Gottfried Schadow. The surface-play in the relief of the sandal-maiden is not completely translated into the round, and only the fragmentary con-

dition helps us over many weaknesses. The hands and the billowing veil which broke the swing of the drapery must certainly have been disturbing. If the Nike held a branch in one hand and held up her veil with the other, as is shown—doubtless rightly—in the reconstruction set up nearby, the rhythm can hardly have avoided the commonplace; in which case it would be fairer to name as its descendants, not the masterpieces of the French Renaissance, but Carpeaux's light-footed dancers in front of the Paris Opera.

We wandered about among the ruins. This area has great charm, especially if you don't give yourself a headache in trying to make out to which temple the remains belong. In a special little building behind the museum you find the great attraction of Olympia, a naked standing woman without feet, but with explicitly masculine attributes, all done in soapy marble. She has a baby on her arm, and is at present standing in a pile of cement in order to conceal the missing portions of her legs. The style reminds one of many things by the Berlin master, Reinhold Begas. When we realized that this was the Hermes of Praxiteles, we beat a hasty retreat.

Without the landscape and without Homer it wouldn't have been worth while. Homer is the more positive reason, for one can't help using him as a key. One would hardly follow nature so obediently, were it not for the inducement she offered us, at the bidding of Homer and his followers, to build up the imperishable temple.

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## CORINTH

AFTER a long railway journey we arrived here in the late afternoon and went for a walk along the causeway by the canal. A large steamer happened to be passing by, and from a distance it looked exactly as though it were walking along the street. The landscape here has more pathos, more line: is less idyllic. Corot has disappeared and Claude is the sole composer. The new Corinth spreads down to the sea, but has not yet pulled itself together and straggles shapelessly about, like an improvisation of some hasty settlers who are going off again in the morning.

On the following morning we went up to the old Corinth. The town was more beautifully placed than Athens and formed a great theater. The almost circular chain of mountains surrounds the widely spreading plain, like an orchestra with the sea as the stage and the castle of Acrocorinth as the back wall. The temple stood in an ideal situation, not too near the sea and not too near the wall of mountains. Even today the seven heavy columns which are still standing—the only verticals in the gigantic plain—act as indispensable connecting links between the castle and the sea.

Of the many periods that devoted their attention to the Fountain the Roman was certainly the best, with its round arches in front of the playful Ionic wall and its charming niches. One can still

feel its intimate and peculiar charm, though the Byzantines spoiled it a good deal with their ridiculous columns.

No doubt we ought to have climbed up to the castle, but we were too lazy.

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## IMPROPTU

WE'VE been back in Athens for a week. Strauss is still here. We met him one evening when he dined with the German *charge d'affaires*. Some very agreeable Greeks, who all spoke excellent German, were there too; the Germans were Thomas and a Viennese architect with his pretty wife. The Greeks, mostly politicians, were remarkably well up in the art treasures of Greece; and one ex-minister knew every morsel of the antique. The minister of agriculture talked about Crete like a learned archeologist. Strauss was enthusiastic. He has given several successful concerts and is busy with his opera *Helena*. Every one expressed the same enthusiasm for us, and of course I let it pass. Thomas, who had kept in the background for some time, smiled dejectedly when I looked at him, and was actually heard to say that I had come on a bit in the meanwhile. His thick spectacles glistened and his shirt bulged out of his dinner jacket. Babuschka was close by and looked my way. I felt like some one who had broken his oath and drank an inordinate amount. Strauss is good at admiring; I believe he enjoys his admiration more acutely than the object that arouses it. I unfolded the landscape, discoursed on the people. That pleased the Greeks—though Thomas pulled a wry face. Strauss nodded. The landscape, of course, and especially the way the temples stand in it. The temples provided the human voice, the landscape the or-

chestra. To Strauss's surprise I suddenly contended that Homer no longer had a place, although I blushed before Babuschka. The Apollo of Olympia was the climax, to Strauss's mind; though perhaps the Hermes of Praxiteles might be more to our taste. Babuschka coughed, Thomas glowed, and I buried my nose in my glass. Finally my gratitude overflowed. Greece was wonderful, and it was a shame to let stupid stories detract from the wonder of it all. Every one present congratulated me on my perspicacity, especially those wonderful Greeks; and I should have dearly loved to straighten Thomas's shirt which gave him a bosom.

Then Strauss asked me about Egypt; and it transpired that he had once been there himself. A wonderful difference between the stiff pose of the Pharaohs and the animation of the Greeks! They all agreed with him, of course. He was at the conductor's desk, baton in hand. Famous musicians are always right. Could you expect Greeks to pass an objective judgment on Greece? Any attempt in this direction would be sure to end in disaster, courteous as all the people present were. But our Egypt! Zoser stiff? Cheops attitudinizing? And our Family! Nobody knew our Family, or Zoser either. Babuschka offered to fetch the photographs from the hotel and I had half a mind to try it myself for a minute or two. But photographs would never have convinced them. Photographs only do justice to Greek sculpture and pictures by Böcklin. We contented ourselves with a quiet smile.

At this moment Thomas broke in and fell foul of my comparison with Böcklin. I couldn't think of anything to say to him. Of course you couldn't take the camera's efforts as your criteria. Incidentally his shirt was swelling out like an air-balloon. Strauss remarked that the Cairo museum had made no impression on him; and the charming Greek, who knew every antiquity in the province said the same. The minister of agriculture confirmed it.

I am not surprised. The Cairo museum is a magazine, a barn, a disgrace. I pitched into the museum as if it were Thomas. This

museum tells us nothing about Egypt, but a lot about the impotence of accredited historians. I enlarged upon this theme, spat venom and indulged in word-play. These functionaries were fictionaries. Things might have gone differently with Strauss if he had been at work on an opera about Hatshepsut.

I was talking nonsense, and knew it. Strauss questioned the remarks I made, though naturally every artist has the right to take what he needs. At all events he agreed that the pyramids held good. Look here! Leave them alone; of course they hold good! Perhaps it would be better not to talk about the pyramids and to reserve one's tolerance for more appropriate objects. There was real hatred in my voice. Why, these men were, so to speak, the inventors of architecture.

Now it was the Viennese architect's turn. He had a great regard for my books on painters, but it was impossible, with the Acropolis in front of one, to talk of another architecture whose only claim to fame was its extreme age.

The Egyptian-Doric column was on the tip of my tongue; but I thought it wouldn't do to go into it now, in view of the likelihood of its carrying our conversation, already unsociable enough, still further beyond the appointed limits. So I gulped back the Egyptian-Doric column and washed it down with champagne. Afterwards Babuschka accused me of deserting the colors. It weakened my position in the architect's eyes, for he now wasn't obliged to go beyond the pyramids, and they were merely a matter for the desert, as everybody knows. On this point I agreed with Strauss, who was talking sense. He was rambling among his recollections. One had to have seen the pyramids. There was warmth in his voice and I felt as though he were talking of my family home. I couldn't help giving him a look of heartfelt gratitude. I never looked at the architect again.

In any case, Strauss added, one mustn't forget that the site of

these imposing erections on the edge of the desert counted as an unusual local advantage.

My blood ran cold. And wasn't the site of the Acropolis an advantage too?

A magnificent advantage, Strauss agreed.

They were all on his side, of course. All the Greeks nodded, and so did all the Germans. Table, chairs and cabinet nodded.

All the same, thought Strauss, to a certain extent one can ignore the situation.

Aha! escaped from me.

For wherever they put the Acropolis, they would sanctify the earth.

Bravo! sounded on every side, and that swine Thomas said: Quite true!

Oh, Thomas! I beckoned to him. Put your shirt in! I exclaimed wildly. The architect advanced upon me, and I pulled myself together. The site of a work was part of the creator's idea. The position of the pyramids on the edge of the desert seemed to me as much of advantage to them as the position of the Acropolis was disadvantageous. One might even speak of a certain disorder. A very acute Frenchman had once spoken of *le désordre des acropoles grecques*.

He smiled. The view was familiar to him; and once again he told me how much he liked my books on painters. One must go back to the plan. Had I seen Eleusis? Given the plan, he could reconstruct the whole votive-temple. Unless you were able to "read the score" of a building, you couldn't judge it adequately.

Strauss was delighted with the expression: "the score of a building." I inquired whether he thought it was necessary to read the score before you could judge an opera.

"Necessary!" He hesitated. "Not exactly necessary."

"Yes, or no, please!"

"Not even for an exhaustive estimate?" asked the architect. I

behaved as though I didn't care any more and drank another glass. It cooled my throat. My hostess, a charming woman, poured me out another and seemed to me like a good angel.

"Don't you think it's all nonsense?" I asked.

"What do I think nonsense?"

"I beg your pardon."

At all events, Strauss said, people wouldn't judge Richard Wagner so unfavorably as it was now the fashion to do if they could read his scores.

The column was on the tip of my tongue again, but the last glass had taken away all my earthly cares; and when the architect pointed out to me that I couldn't really deny the beauty of the Parthenon, I heartily agreed with him. The Parthenon (*tra-la*) had nothing to do with the case. The remains of the column were still in my mouth. Meanwhile Strauss was praising Wagner's orchestration.

"Excuse me," said the architect, "but it would greatly interest me from a psychological point of view to hear your objections."

Objections! Objections again! Why, merely the deluding of the instincts. All this de-de-delusion led to the world war. Besides, I can't stand that abandoned sensuality.

The architect's eyes started out of his head; and Babuschka hastened to explain to him that I was talking about Wagner, not the Acropolis.

Babuschka has a bump of locality and is always right; I believe she could even read the sc. . . sc. . . score of a building.

The nice Greek invited us to go with him to Cape Sunion. A splendid idea! Ahoy for Cape Sunion! I was in a Dionysiac mood. To my disappointment I discovered that we should have to wait a day or two.

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## MOSAICS

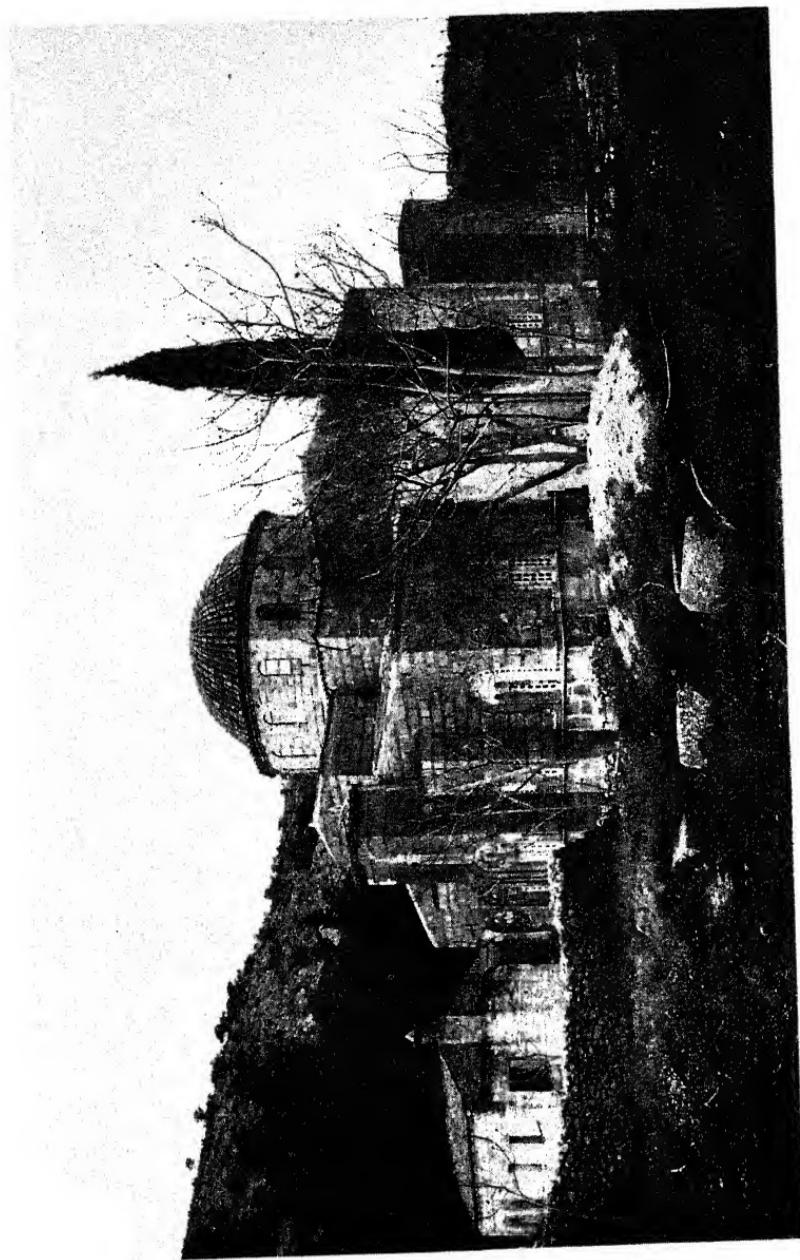
THE Greek genius doesn't leave off at ancient temples and statues. The antique occupies only the immediately accessible part of its circumference: the material part, as one might say. Measured by time and space it appears as the smaller part; for it is limited by the end of pagan civilization. For people of our day the existence of Greece subsequent to antiquity is the greater miracle.

On the way from Athens to Eleusis lies the one spacious and wealthy monastery in Greece: Daphni. In the church there they have discovered and laid bare Byzantine mosaics of the eleventh century. Only large fragments, unfortunately. They resemble those in Venice—especially the large mosaic with the striding Christ awaking the dead, on the façade at Torcello—but are a little less vehement and a trifle more lively. You feel the antique origin of mosaic more plainly at Daphni than in Italy, from their less violent alertness, their hidden Attic smile—perhaps it is merely the effect of livelier color—their attitudes which explain rather than command. Only the bust of the bearded Christ in the dome has the absolutely ineluctable solemnity of a religious conviction which destroys man's dream and imposes duties upon him.

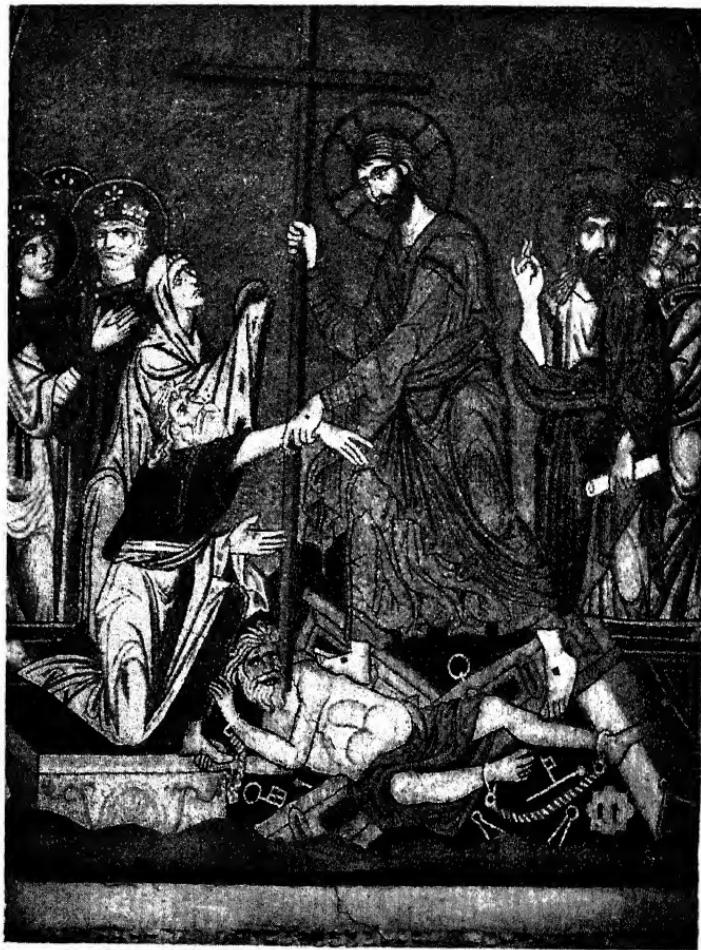
You react almost automatically to these mosaics, and submit to their emphatic injunctions without an attempt at resistance; whereas any painted easel picture, of whatever period, must first substanti-

ate its claims upon your attention. We allow ourselves to dispute with Raphael, investigate his degree of intensity, consult our memories to see whether the motif has been used before, and condemn the treatment as feebler. We are petty and lacking in piety and are always qualifying even our masterpieces. A mosaic passes unchallenged, and although it generally repeats something that has been said before, you take off your hat every time and believe that a new revelation has been vouchsafed to you. The origin of these pictures is known. Very much belated successors of the Greeks to whom we are indebted for the statues and temples put the pictures together out of little bits of stone: anonymous and completely impersonal craftsmen. Their art does not enter into it at all. An atom of this stiffness would be enough to make us attack and condemn the productions of the same race, on the same soil, fifteen centuries earlier; and the mechanical craftsmanship unenlivened by any personal touch, which we find so utterly satisfying in the mosaics, would strike us as the sin against the spirit of art if it were to show itself in antique sculpture, and no glamor of mere age could dull our sensibility.

Mosaic is not in itself responsible for this extraordinary effect, for we do not react so obligingly to antique mosaic decorations. Pagan mosaics always have something commonplace and degenerate about their handling; many a visitor is left cold by the naturalism of the Battle of Alexander in the Naples museum. It cannot be merely the use of outline; for the pictorial styles of every race have made us sow our wild oats at one time or another. Perhaps it's the gold. Even without the figure the glittering surface would hold enchantment enough. In that case we should be enslaved by crassly material means. That is not the case; for the far less vigorous early Christian mosaics in Italy, which are not on a gold ground, are equally enchanting. The Baptistry and the Mausoleum at Ravenna are among our sanctuaries. It must surely be the legend which is intricately entangled in the walls of the place: a glittering



The Daphni Monastery near Athens.



Mosaic, Daphni. The Resurrection of Lazarus:

chain of pictures like a singing choir. That is what takes our fancy. The universal rhythm, akin to the antique dithyramb, is what stirs our spirit and senses; but since we all can and may bear our part in it, since it brings us back to the home for which we long so ardently, it is immeasurably superior to that ancient mystery. It is not art that we see in these signs: nothing that can be personally examined and personally analyzed. To us they hardly seem like pictures; and all other pictures contrived by human hands, even the greatest, seem profane by comparison. They are the gestures of a familiar scene. They do not seize upon us or protect us or come down to us. They remain on high.

That too is Greek. The genius of the race held its ground when the sun-illumined hall of the temple disappeared, along with its richly decorated pediment, and the exterior yielded its place to the interior. The sun stayed outside. The genius of the race must first be swallowed up in earth and darkness, in order to unfold itself anew. It rose again with a peal of bells from the Christian graves and formed the circle of the churches of the martyrs. The basilica received its congregation.

My thoughts were full of it. The transition from the temple to the church is an event which is perfectly accessible to the thoughtful mind. The share of the Greeks in this development also requires no violent effort on the part of our brain. Other historical facts still present themselves, and we amuse or vex ourselves with them every day. The obviousness of this historical process leaves no room for reflection. Our previous notions were small, were almost insignificant; and once the eye has functioned, we must think again, and in a new region, moreover—a highly concrete and positive region—which we have never touched upon before. That impressed me. Alongside the great transition I saw many transitions, which affected me personally; with my grasp I suddenly saw everything that had disquieted me as I contemplated ancient Athens, that had hampered my admiration. Alongside the columnar exterior of the

temple and the spacious interior of the church, I saw a third which accomplished the transition from temple to church; and in the presence of this obvious fact all criticism and all enthusiasm regarding both of them became insignificant. I was overwhelmed. At this moment I disliked having to look at the pretty hat of the lady from Athens and her Danish leather bag, which she carried in her hand and which was utterly unobjectionable. I had to make an effort to go on behaving like an interested tourist and exchange the usual words with the nice Greeks who had taken us there. I don't know why, but I should have much preferred to be in my own den in Berlin. The visual man recoils at the idea of thought.

We went on from Daphni to the sea and lay on the sand opposite Salamis. We should really have liked to visit Eleusis, the site of the mysteries, but it seemed too far away. On our way back we had some beautiful views of the Acropolis.

The mosaics betoken the Greek's ineradicable attachment to the flat surface, the most fundamental of all his qualities in the spatial arts and one from which neither his sculpture nor his architecture could ever break free. His instinct was always to adorn a surface before he shaped it; writing was his most natural activity. In the mosaics you can detect some of the graphic qualities of the vases; and the connection impresses you far more readily than the survival of the Greek spirit in Christian architecture.

On the following day I visited the collection of Denys Loverdo in Athens; and was reminded of later developments in the same direction. Loverdo possesses a great number of ikons of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, all from Crete. The charming color of these painters of the saints is obviously due to the appropriate influence of mosaic. Details seem to have been directly adopted. The figures are often of an excessively long shape steeped in asceticism and mysticism. The color scheme retains its positive consistency. Ecstasy gleams in the restrained tones of purple and emerald and sapphire. These pictures point not only to the past,

when there were still Byzantine mosaics, but also forwards, in a fashion which is always unmistakable and often astonishing, to the great Greek master of the sixteenth century, who seems to our generation the solitary Messiah of the Greek spirit and who has acquired in our own day an enthusiastic public: Domenico Theotocopuli, called El Greco. Except for his pictures only a few trifling details of his life in Toledo have survived, and none regarding his early days in Crete. We only know that he was prouder of this origin than of the honor of having been a favorite pupil of Titian's; and to the last he signed his works in Greek. For centuries Crete, or Candia, had belonged to the Venetians; and like many other Greeks, young Domenico brought from the home of his fathers nothing but the blood he inherited. In Venice he found not merely a modern palette. One can imagine him spending idle hours in St. Mark's hidden in the dark chapel of St. Clemente, from which you get the best view of the mosaic in the transept. Or even more enraptured before the solitary mosaic of the Madonna in the dome at Murano or the apse of Torcello. For he carried with him this exalted and touching Mother of God, along with all the saints and angels and the whole of Byzantine mysticism, on his long journey, and with their help in a foreign land he created afresh the whole enchantment of the Greek surface, nobler and more tender, more exalted and more ardent than ever Greece had been throughout her whole career.

Crete is the site of the earliest Greek culture. Homer sings of the island's hundred cities. In the Dictæan cave Zeus came into the world and Minos his son and the Minotaur. At Knossos they found the first traces of the Egyptians of the Middle Kingdom; and from here Mycenæ was fertilized. Then the development passed to the Greek mainland, and the island, which played no part in Greek history seemed dead. But in Crete we find the most important painters of Greek ikons; a whole school of them. And Crete is the fatherland of El Greco. The mosaics are enough to connect him

with his native land. The ikons are a modest connecting link. They certainly meant more to El Greco than the stimulus of the painter, for because of the number of Titian's pupils this can hardly have counted for much. The ikons bound the Greek to his fatherland, the believer to his church, and impelled him to serve a congregation that threatened to dispense with his turbulent genius. The countless, almost schematic, repetitions of many of his purely religious motifs—especially the single figures of saints—can only be regarded as humble ikons.

If you wish to be still more discreet, later painters like Kutusi and his pupil Kanduni, by whom there are some pictures in the Loverdo collection and in the gallery, permit you to detect possible signs of the influence of El Greco on the last remains of indigenous art. In many respects that yet remains to be studied. The school of El Greco, which it would be worth while to discuss, was only discovered in the age of Renoir and Cézanne.

Accidentally, while you are staring at antique marbles, the flower of another Greece flutters your way: one of the countless flowers. On that account, negative experiences are here impossible. My disappointment in Athens is due to my dislike of an accidentally inadequate interpretation. We have seen a bad production of a masterpiece; and it's the fault of archeology. Our archeologists are like producers who, instead of gliding discreetly over their author's superficiality, try to extract melodramatic effects out of these weaknesses because they are certain to bring down the house.

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## CAPE SUNION

Of all the temples Sunion has the loveliest site. The plateau is much smaller than that of the Acropolis and easier to crown; and the situation conceals the temple, at any rate on the land side. In a day or two, on our way to Constantinople, we shall discover how it looks from the sea. Not until you reach almost the top of the hill does the marble stand all white before you, as a last surprise. The surrounding landscape exaggerates, if possible, the usual play of contrast. The romance closes with a dramatic scene. You might almost believe that the Creator had suddenly torn himself violently away from the work that was dearest to him, and, in order not to be sentimental, had been satisfied with an inspired sketch for the finale. Nowhere is it easier to imagine a personal Creator. Natural as the ancient pantheon may seem in Greece, the ardor of the ecstatic Christian is equally intelligible.

You stand on the plateau, which is built far out into the sea, like a sort of revolving stage. The finale is not without its discordant note. In the midst of the floating, drifting, weathered forms that circle round us, the rows of columns give support to the eye. It is not the structural aspect alone that reassures us. The temple is a ruin, and as such is far more conclusive. One would never wish to see it on the acropolis as it once was, intact and peopled with the men of those days. Only as a ruin did it arrive at its

fullest completion. It does not crown the hill alone. The building was only a small part of the hill when entire. Now the gleaming marble crowns the whole panorama. Its color is utterly unlike that of the Parthenon and plays quite a different rôle in the natural ensemble. It is not the form but the color that carries the rhythm which rejoices and reassures us. It begins far below us in the deep blue sea, which would turn almost black but for the movement, yet retains quite light tones in its gentle ripples. They do not seem to be blue, but green, which near the shore turns to the palest emerald.

The sea was breathing peacefully and letting the sun do as it liked—dissolve all the forms, distort all the colors except blue, and turn the earth into a shimmer, so that one might easily have mistaken the sea for dry land and the land for a part of the silver sky. The height of the stage above the sea seemed more important than the distance of the sky, because we could feel the sky on our heads and were walking about in it. In this shimmer the columns took on the purest tone, a cross between bleached bones and snow-crystals. They had used a very white marble from the neighborhood which decomposes far more readily than that of the Parthenon but does not oxidize pink; on the contrary, the white becomes intenser with the action of the sea air.

The flutes of the Doric columns are broader than usual, and the salt has eaten them away till they are wider still and the angles have lost all their sharpness. The friability of the stone, as at Segesta, favors the marriage of form with atmosphere, only it is a hundred times lovelier.

The light accentuates the abstractness of the temple and releases it from the least association with utilitarian architecture. It no longer has any façade or any interior, and nobody would ever appreciate its spaciousness from a photograph. We ourselves acquired a spherical quality and moved about in front of the weathered steps of the temple with white teacups in our hands without bickering.

As long as we were up here we lived through the eye alone; and although we chattered amiably to each other, everybody felt how vision isolated him and how his own real contact was with the glittering stone. Strauss was silent; he was apparently occupied with his finale.

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## CONSTANTINOPLE

We traveled here with the architect and his pretty wife. The weather was fine. As though it wanted to fool me for the last time, the Acropolis showed up to the best advantage just after we left the Piræus. The pediment of the Parthenon was seen full face and S. Giorgio joined up with the hill of the Acropolis. The whole town carried the temple; and at last it became an organic head and a supernatural sign. Probably the mariners arranged this on purpose and subordinated all other views to this.

The architect lay curled up on a bench on the upper deck; and his field-glasses were glued to his eyes till the last glimmer of marble had disappeared. To our delight the captain brought the ship close in to Cape Sunion, but at this distance the finale was silent.

A new picture: the entrance to the Bosphorus. One ought to do nothing but sail round outside and never set foot in the town. To a Delacroix, unrolling his grandiose perspective, a glance at any primitive reproduction would be sufficient to divine nature's intentions, and to surpass them. But the Turks have divined nothing. They have jumbled up big houses and little houses and minarets and mosques, and dotted them about the landscape without a thought for any but the baldest utilitarian requirements. No house

stands as it ought to stand; and the religious buildings are piled up in clusters.

Constantinople is typical of vegetating Islam. Nowhere, either in Cairo or in Spain, is the helplessness of its formal sense so obvious. The Turks have stuck at the first stage of colonization, and are as little in place here as their brothers on the Nile. Without the remains of other civilizations one would find it hard to believe that they were settled here at all. Though entrancingly situated, the Seraglio is nothing but the hastiest improvisation; and no one would dream of supposing that the Sultans who resided here were imperial potentates. This is how hurried governors build, who may be gone by tomorrow. In the seventeenth century and even earlier you find the astonishingly commonplace setting of a modern monarch. It does not repel you, however. There is something almost touching about the poverty of the whole layout.

In one of the many garden-like places they have just arranged a collection of Chinese porcelain; there is some good blue and white Kang-Hsi among it. In such surroundings the Asiatic decoration seemed extraordinarily natural; whereas every Turkish attempt to appropriate European architectural forms merely betrays the cravings of a kleptomaniac.

The inhabitants of the town have had to put away their oriental costumes. There are no dogs and no fezzes any more, and the women go unveiled. The veil lies on their hair and can be pulled down at a moment's notice, and many Moslems carry their turbans in their pockets, to have them at hand against the fall of Kemal. Nobody ventures to do so before that happens. Impenitent wearers of the fez are executed. Kemal's views on dress perhaps symbolize the promised renovation of the people; but the town has looked like Kattowitz ever since. It is very remarkable and significant, alike of this Mussolini and of the place as well. The picturesque Orient famed in song survived only in the native costume. Probably Stamboul was never anything but a fancy-dress

Kattowitz, and Kemal has done an admirable thing in suppressing the masquerade.

The ancient remains of the town dating from the pre-Christian period are of little or no importance. Even the museum contains hardly anything of artistic value that one would care to carry off. The early things are mostly ethnographic junk and the later Greek works are a libel on the Greek spirit; the worst of all is the Alexander sarcophagus admired by all archeologists—a monstrous piece of furniture. The connection of this symbol of bourgeois gorgeousness with the name of the proud conqueror rouses one's indignation. Thomas has written the thesis for his doctorate on the subject; he argues that Alexander never lay in this sarcophagus, though this masterpiece of Attic art is well worthy of Alexander.

Here and there, hidden by Turkish whitewash, you can still see traces of the Byzantine golden age. The most remarkable, though least conspicuous, remains are underground: the gigantic water-cisterns, immeasurable halls, whose floor is under water and whose vaulted ceilings are held up by countless columns. "Halls" is much too mild a word. When I entered the first cistern I was seized with a sort of agoraphobia. It is called the cistern of the thousand and one columns. A forest of stone extends, one imagines, under the entire city. Fantastic pictures, dark and grand and utterly strange, play over the glistening mirror of water. Creatures of another world might here have disported themselves or performed their unholy rites. The actual fact that an exceedingly plausible and practical purpose, the collecting of water, is responsible for all this splendor, arouses the resistance of our mystery-loving imagination, which alone here under the earth gets an inkling of the legendary Constantinople it was expecting and was denied above ground. Columns and columns: a perfect paroxysm of them. It seems the Doric flutes of light have long since been shut out. The whole darkness of earth now rests on these firm supports; and the capitals bend under the burden.

Down below, the forests of columns in the cisterns; up above, Agia Sophia. We didn't really want to see anything else; that was what we'd come for. I hoped it would restore my confidence in the antique which had begun to totter in Athens. I was expecting the dignity of the temple at Jerusalem in an accentuated form, the magnificence of S. Vitale at Ravenna still further enhanced, a more spiritualized St. Mark's. I hoped for a resounding chord of Byzantine Hellenism and Hellenic Christianity, expected a Christian temple. The Agia Sophia of our dreams may have existed once upon a time, were it only during those first thirty years till the earthquake brought down the original dome. Then the praises of the risen Redeemer rang out on the hymn of a risen humanity. A man of genius, Anthemius by name, in merit no less than Phidias and worthy to be kept in remembrance, shaped the vessel of the Christian dithyramb; and even after it had been restored by successors, who were of his own spirit, Justinian's boast that he had surpassed the temple of Solomon may well have been justified. Today the building has lost its note; and with the unfanciful eye of knowledge we contemplate an instrument which is played no more. The construction of the dome is interesting, remarked my friend the architect.

Once again the power of mosaics is confirmed, but this time in the negative. They were once the eyes of the cathedral, and their gaze streamed down from on high upon the worshippers below, as long as the pictures up above remained. The Turks have smeared over their magnificence with yellow sauce and blinded the temple. The surviving anatomy is misleading, since it ascribes the effect to an oriental emperor's passion for splendor, not to the all-embracing hymn of the congregation. We miss El Greco's baldachin of the heavenly host.

The first thing that Kemal must do in order to justify himself before the world, with which he wishes to range his people, is to unveil Agia Sophia. Not for the Christians, not for the Orthodox

dogma, but for the sake of *Sophia*. Whatever one may feel about his politics, and the politics of all dictators, these gestures become them. His complaisance would in this instance amount to an act of creation. You can carry away the pictures from our cathedrals and knock off the heads of the stone saints, but the cathedral still remains. As long as a Gothic pillar is left standing, it carries the baldachin over the heads of the congregation. Here, however, in a perfectly preserved building which still serves the purposes of a cult, the given intention of the building is withheld from us. It is as though the stone refused to serve Islam and preferred annihilation to defilement. From the porch, whose nobility reminds you of the vestibule of St. Mark's, you step into a sumptuous hall of gigantic dimensions, whose intention remains doubtful. At first you suppose it is meant for superficial social usage: a reception-room which would do for games and dancing and in which one or two members of the common people slink about like burglars with their boots in their hands; or a concert-hall of fantastic luxury, in the morning, with the conductor's desk empty, and no music.

The Turkish additions are comparatively harmless. The most disturbing are confined to the movable things: the ridiculous floor-covering, the multitudes of candelabra hanging low, the round shields made of green cardboard with gold inscriptions, high up above. They are all improvisations that could be swept away at once; and the mosaic is already gleaming here and there through the whitewash. If only Kemal had a spark of taste! It isn't even a question of taste: merely an involuntary movement of the instinct which makes us save something that threatens to fall off the table. There are enough mosques in Stamboul. To my mind, they ought to forbid all religious services, Christian as well, and declare Agia Sophia as European property. Here anybody might worship, if not God, then at least humanity.

However, Kemal would be more likely to prescribe English

policemen's helmets for his subjects; and in any case the League of Nations would probably raise objections.

At present one can study materials and identify the different sorts of marble which cover the lower part of the walls. Verde antico columns carry the two-storied arcades. They didn't spare expense: three hundred and sixty hundredweight of gold without simple or compound interest. In S. Vitale at Ravenna the commonplace baroque decoration disfigures a good part of the surface, but mosaics which adorn the apse assist our imaginary reconstruction, and the crass difference of style doesn't destroy the spirit of the place. In Agia Sophia the blinding of the mosaics causes a disturbance among the details which are actually untouched, and the whole color-scheme becomes senseless or commonplace. The white marble capitals don't suit the dark green columns, although the white has been toned down a great deal. With neck-breaking labor they have pierced the capitals in the arcade into a kind of finicking filigree-work and turned them into rigid lace; and it takes some time before you realize for certain that the material is marble, not stucco. When you know it's marble you get quite unhappy about the extravagance of it all. You scour the place for scandals, like poor people visiting a millionaire and getting indignant. The construction of the dome is bold, but never quite bold enough. At the most sensitive point the logic breaks down. Why isn't the church entirely composed of semicircular niches and domes? Why this nave, that interrupts the flow of the central building and harks back to the basilica? Sped on by the domes at either end, the eye wants a concave bit in the middle; that, in fact, is just where concavity is needed, and the eye is offended by the motionless plane-surface, particularly by the excessive size of the semicircular portions at the top, with the double rows of ill-placed windows. In the same way, there are too many windows; and the exaggerated brightness, which is increased these days by the maltreatment of the domes, can never have been to the advantage of the original decoration. Only the

frieze of forty windows in the main dome is justified both from a practical and from an ornamental point of view. The openings in the middle walls spoil the frieze and have a gap-toothed look. I suspect there has been some patching here. In any case, an old drawing shows a different arrangement of the windows; but even this document does not give the original disposition of the period of Justinian. I cannot imagine that Anthemius wanted any window-opening in these two lateral walls, especially if he planned these walls as they stand at present. On the contrary, the surfaces now pierced with windows were an ideal field for pictures. If the semi-circles carried boldly designed motifs in mosaic, it would be far easier to overlook the compromise between round building and basilica. The pictorial rhythm would be an adequate substitute for recession, and the dignity of the representation would justify the plane surfaces. Imagine Christ with the Apostles on one side, as—for instance—in the apse of SS. Cosma e Damiano in Rome; and as a pendant on the opposite side, perhaps a group with the Queen of Heaven, as in S. Apollinare Nuovo or in the cathedral at Parenzo. There is no lack of patterns for the pictures. Surfaces so eminently adaptable are hard to find.

The effect of the arcades is immeasurably better in the round parts. Here alone at a favorable moment can the eye of the imagination excuse the loss of the mosaics. Our friend, the architect, found places in the entrance wall where, by hiding behind a pillar, you were unable to see the lateral walls and were only aware of the niches with their domes. You got the illusion that it went further and that even the middle of the building was made out of similar sections of domes. Then the building ceased to look like a luxurious hall. I won't go so far as to say it was a church again; but the space woke up, moved and sang, and this concert set the listener swinging. Now the whole cupola seemed to be floating, and this was only a part of the miracle. The concert of sounds made us stand on tiptoe. You could almost have believed that like the fretted

marble of the capitals and arches it was a petrified network of some indefinite fabric.

The exterior of the building, with the crutch-like supports and the confusing additions, is not worth considering. It cannot be said to have any form. In the presence of this jumble it is better to dismiss henceforth from one's thoughts all recollection of the beautiful temple-exteriora one has brought with one from Greece. The exterior, too, was built by Greeks; it was carried—or mis-carried—out by the same Anthemius. He knew what he was doing. We have as little right to suppose that he was ignorant of the temple-façades of his forbears as that he was trying to come to terms with the basilica.

In the forecourt, which the visitor passes through on his way to the church, they have started an extremely primitive open-air café, where shrieking Turkish waiters request you to take a seat. It's all part and parcel of it. I thought of that place by the Jordan with the stuffed beasts in the trees and the derelict gramophone, where they say Christ was baptised. Mohammed respected Christ, and the Mohammedan religion has taken over this and that from our own; in any case it stands much nearer to us than many others, especially the cult of the ancient gods. It is odd how badly Islamic art compares with ours, how little community of religious ideas influences form, and how powerfully racial antipathies hamper the amalgamation of creative instincts. No mosque allows you to forget that it is a travesty of a church; in the circumstances you would more readily endure still more brutal encroachments. The nature of a mosque is incompatible with our architecture; it sweetens and softens forms whose charm lies in their acerbity. The mischievous results of the contact are only noticeable where we are responsible for making the first advances towards a reconciliation and we are the receivers. In the Norman cathedral and royal palaces of Sicily which are still under Saracen influence the remains of oriental ways of life are enough to weaken appreciably the

Nordic form. In the midst of our astonishment at the magnificence of the mosaics at Monreale we have a lurking sense of strangeness which completely destroys the simplicity of such pictures. The cathedral lacks abundance of space, and the arid forms of the building make the enormous mosaic look like an interloper from outside who cannot enter into living relations with the congregation. The chapel in the royal palace at Palermo with its tall and over-elegant pointed arches, its mosaics and its frightful stalactite ceiling is merely another luxurious ornament, and in spirit belongs more to the East than to ourselves.

A drop of oriental taste is still discernible in the black and white ornamentation of the cathedrals of Umbria and Tuscany; and we may doubt whether it was altogether favorable to the Italianization of Gothic.

The so-called Little Agia Sophia, once dedicated to SS. Sergius and Bacchus, is a sketch for the big one and is superior inasmuch as the central system, as in S. Vitale at Ravenna, is consistently carried out. That is how Anthemius started. His creative will remains free as yet from personal ambition and is exercised about the harmony of complete symmetry. Here, too, we note his indifference to the exterior, which had merely to provide for material security. To this day it would not be a serious business to convert the interior back into a Byzantine jewel. The mosaics are even more thoroughly covered with cold Protestant white. Probably they lie undisturbed under the whitewash. The pleasant square in front of the church, from which we gazed at the Turkish coast, might be a corner of Ravenna.

Agia Sophia has a heap of illegitimate offshoots in Constantinople. Outside they look like kitchen utensils thickly studded with dishcovers. Inside they are Turkish baths without water. In the pretty church of the Chora in the extreme north of the city, now called Kahrie-Djami, we found a narrow hall with mosaics intact. They are late: fourteenth century, I believe. The astounding

animation of the drawing here brings mosaic close to painting. Their realism is also advanced, though the technique of the tesseræ is always somewhat whimsical. They are intimate mosaics whose modest dimensions suit the hall. Dithyramb yields to a conversational tone adapted to story-telling, but the tone preserves the rhythmic sequence. The picture always remains agreeably decorative; in that respect it differs favorably from wall-painting as then practiced in Italy, where they tried to turn the wall into a book. The usual comparison of these mosaics with Giotto leaves out of account the fundamental Greek quality of flatness. Giotto began to destroy the wall-surface: an act which was to lead to the flowering of a new art. The mosaics of Kahrie-Djami are still part and parcel of the wall. Their palette contains entrancing tints. We were fascinated by a peacock decked out in all its glory.

Suddenly Babuschka started off again about Queen Hatshepsut, and wanted to know whether we could look forward to visiting Egypt again next winter.

THE END





















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